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LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

VOLUME I

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY
69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.E.

B. HERDER
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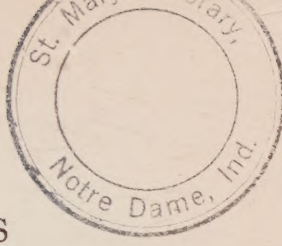

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

In modern times great use has been made of what is called the Comparative Method. It is a process by which facts, more or less of the same sort, are collected, and then compared; after this, an attempt is made to judge whether groups, which at first appeared isolated, are really connected; and sometimes, whether one group is more valuable than another. Immense progress has been made by the use, in our medical schools, of Comparative Anatomy; much light has been thrown on the interrelation of races by Comparative Philology, or the study of their languages; all who are interested in politics, or sociology, or economics, and make any pretence to be considered scientific, apply the comparative method to the history of states, or society, or money.

The same method can be applied to any phenomenon, be it practice or idea. Religion includes both practices and ideas, and is itself the most interesting phenomenon on the face of the earth. Nowhere, accordingly, has so much eagerness been shown as in the study of Religion according to the Comparative Method. Here, of course, the triple process must carefully be observed, though we find that in practice its stages are often confused. The facts about the world's religions should first of all be accurately ascertained; they should then be compared and contrasted; and finally, general laws (should any such emerge) and general appreciations (should any such be possible) may be formulated.

Catholics believe their religion to be a unique revelation given to them by God through his Incarnate Son. They believe also that a gradual revelation of Himself was granted, in a special manner, to the Jews. All other forms of religion they accordingly believe to be not only inadequate, but deficient in an essential quality which their own possesses. These other religions are in the main natural, while theirs is supernatural, though we acknowledge that the working out of these notions, in theory and in fact, is matter for most careful reflection and delicacy of expression. It might hence be thought that they would resent any comparison of their own religion with others. This is not so. They are indeed anxious that Christianity should be known—only so can it be appreciated; and, once appreci-

THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

From the French of

THE REV. L. DE GRANDMAISON

(*Editor of the "Études"*)

"He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth . . . that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him."—ACTS xvii. 26-27.

"It is hard work to find God."—PLATO.

I

RELIGION: THE WORD AND THE THING

THE word RELIGION, which is common to all the languages of Western Europe, is a Romance form of the Latin word *religio* (relligio). The true etymology of this word connects it with *re-legere* (to re-collect, to recall before one's mind, to reflect; all with a shade of concentration and anxiety). The current etymology, which, since Lactantius at any rate, seeks to relate *religion* with *re-ligare* (to bind, join, unite), though philologically inexact, has at least the advantage of expressing far more vividly the actual and living meaning of the word.

In a recent book,[1] Mr Morris Jastrow, after examining the different definitions of *religion* advanced by his predecessors, sums them up as follows:—

"Religion consists of three elements: (1) The natural recognition of a Power or Powers beyond our control;

[1] *The Study of Religion*, 1901, p. 171 *sqq.*

(2) the feeling of dependence upon this Power or Powers; (3) entering into relations with this Power or Powers.

"Uniting these elements into a single proposition, religion may be defined as the natural belief in a Power or Powers beyond our control, and upon whom we feel ourselves dependent; which belief and feeling of dependence prompt (1) to organization; (2) to specific acts; and (3) to the regulation of conduct, with a view to establishing favourable relations between ourselves and the Power or Powers in question."[1]

This synthetic description, which is fairly accurate and complete, has none the less the serious defect of not bringing sufficiently into light the *specific element*, the transcendent quality, of all religion which is worthy of that name. It is not enough to say that the religious man recognizes "a power or powers which do not depend on himself." We must say that he *at least in fact* conceives this Power, this Force, or, more exactly, the Being which has possession of it, as *first*, *sovereign*, or *ultimate*. He may make mistakes about the *subject* of the divine power, *i.e.* he may attribute that power to many subjects or possessors, or else to a single subject whom an enlightened reason can show to be manifestly incapable of possessing it. But, for such a man, and in such of his actions as properly may be styled religious, this Power is *supreme* and *ultimate*; beyond it he neither knows of nor can imagine any other.

[1] Other definitions in quantities have been given. Usually a flaw in the presupposed philosophy of their inventor makes them, too, vitiated. Huxley called Religion "Reverence and Love for the Ethical Ideal and the desire to realize that ideal in Life"; Kant said it "consists in our recognizing all one's duties as divine commands." Recently M. S. Reinach, in his *Orpheus* (1909, p. 3, Eng. tr.), defined Religion as "a sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties," eliminating thus from religion not only beliefs and doctrines, but all religious sentiments, ethics, rites, and cultus, and "empties out the baby with the bath." He gives us a "General History of Religions" where there is plenty of generality, and even a good deal of history, but not a grain of religion.

There can in consequence be no religion, in the full and pregnant meaning of the word, save where we can discover, as implicit perhaps, yet none the less as in practice recognized, the transcendent character of the Being to which are addressed prayer, adoration, sacrifice. In other words, Religion is the *sum-total of beliefs, sentiments, and practices, individual or social, which have for their object a power which man recognizes as supreme, on which he depends, and with which he can enter (or has entered) into relation.*

Below this level there will none the less exist actions, emotions, and beliefs analogous to the beliefs and emotions and actions of religion, and participating in some of their characteristics.

II

Leading Religious Notions

The first, which in importance surpasses all the rest, is the idea of God, or of the Divine. This idea will express itself by the word *God*, if the ultimate Power, on which man recognizes himself as dependent, is, by analogy with human personality, conceived as *personal*; by the word *divine*, if the idea remains obscure and vague, and refrains from defining the way in which that Power is what it is.

Theism and its Divisions

Theism is that conception of religious philosophy according to which the subject of the Divine Attributes (Self-dependence, Omnipotence, Universal Fatherhood, Omnipresence) is distinct from all other existences, and transcendent—that is to say, in a superior and incommensurable order, in their regard.

Pantheism is the erroneous notion whereby the

subject of the Divine Attributes is identified with all that exists.

MONOTHEISM and POLYTHEISM are the two subdivisions into which Theism falls, according as these Attributes are considered as subsisting in a single Being, or as parcelled out among many.

This explicit conception of the Divinity, which presupposes a certain stage of philosophic development, is overlaid, to a great extent, in many nations, by a crust of religious notions far less distinct and elaborated, and far more concrete.

ANIMISM

ANIMISM is the name generally given to the conception which is at the root of these notions. Animism consists in attributing a will, passions, and powers modelled on the human type (*anthropomorphic*, that is) to mere material objects, or to non-human living creatures. These objects, now that they may thus be considered as animated, endowed with a principle of life and action (soul, spirit, breath, or *mana*), can in certain circumstances enter into direct relation with man in his individual or social capacities. Since the power attributed to them is regarded as extraordinary, superior, superhuman, it is but a short step to invoke them, to establish actions and ceremonies destined to do them pleasure, to propitiate them, to appease them. The last step is to consider them, and to treat them, actually as gods.

NATURE-WORSHIP, AND TOTEMISM

Among many peoples, the fear mingled with respect which is the beginning of Adoration, fastened at first upon the great forces of Nature, celestial or atmospheric: the heavens, the sun, the moon; the stars and planets; storms and fire. This is the

religion of *Nature*. But very frequently, and indeed, as a rule, the superior and "Divine" powers are considered to reside in some determinate class of material or artificial objects, or in them to manifest themselves in some special way. Hence comes the worship of stones and holy places (the *High-places* of which the Bible speaks), of trees and sacred woods, of sacred animals. Nature-worship has left its mark most deeply on the religion of ancient Greece and Rome, of Egypt, and of the Semites. Indeed, any nation which grows up in wide plains, as did the Babylonians and the Egyptians, are constantly invited by the mighty glory of the heavens, and the miracle—so overwhelmingly splendid and sudden in the south—of sunrise and of sunset, to see in the great orbs of Heaven their origin and the rulers of their destiny. And nations whose life is agricultural or pastoral rather than that of the huntsman, will, of necessity, evolve field-and-woods worship, and celebrate the mystic cycle of the dying and re-born year. Hence the sun-cults of Egypt and Assyria, etc.; hence the supreme Aryan Light-God. Zeus and Jupiter, chief among the Greeks and Romans respectively, alike derived their name from the root *div*, or *bright*. Hence, again, the long litanies of nature-titles, drawn from rain, or wind, or cloud, or lightning, given to those gods; hence the problematical Asiatic worships of the young Year-God, slain violently each winter, to rise once more in spring. Of course ingenuity has here run riot. The *Corn-spirit* is, by one authority, held to explain the most divergent rituals; the cult of the *Heavenly Twins* is for Dr. Rendel Harris a master-key of mysteries. Roscher's famous *Lexicon* explains every title of Athene from her supposed identification with the *storm-cloud*. Once we were called upon to explain all ancient history as *solar myth*: not only the pagan deities, but Abraham and Samson became sun-symbols; the twelve Apostles

were the signs of the Zodiac. Archbishop Whately's clever proof that Napoleon himself was but a solar myth showed that people were already emancipating themselves from that now antiquated folly. But see *infra*, pp. 13 n., 21. In particular, *Totemism*—a name borrowed from a dialect of the Red Indians—consists in a religious alliance contracted between a *tribe* or *clan* and a vegetable or more often animal species (bear, beaver, crow etc.). Hence arise initiations, imitations, dramatic representations, tales and myths. The artificial objects put into relation with the gods, and participating in the respectful fear entertained for them, assume the character of *fetish* or *idol*, for no clean-cut distinction between these names can be laid down: an idol is but a *worked* fetish; it is less crude, better modelled.

We are aware that almost any of these definitions can be disputed; it has, for instance, been maintained that a totem is no more than a tribal or family or personal crest; and the name *fetish* is constantly misused. A few examples will at any rate show that, whatever its origin, totemism assumed sooner or later a definitely religious influence, or is not, at any rate, a mere arbitrary social symbol. Thus from the Clan-totem the whole clan believes itself descended; the progenitor of the Iroquois turtle-clan was a turtle so fat that his shell wearied him when he tried to walk; he threw it off, stood upright, and evolved himself into a man. Called by the totem's name, the clansmen believe that the totem is incarnate in every member of its species [this differentiates it from the mere individual object called *Fetish*], and most intimately united with themselves. Thus, if by accident they kill their totem-animal, they often are in despair, they will apologize to it, throw the blame on, *e.g.*, their hunting-spear. Among the East Africa Wanika, the mourning for a dead hyæna, their ancestor, is far more passionate and prolonged than that for a dead

chief. It is buried in pomp, and was, during life, protected by threatening tales of penalties incurred by violating it. Among the Omahas, the Red Maize clan never eat red maize; if they did, running sores would break out all round their mouths. Boils and white spots would be the penalty for touching, even, the male elk, among the Elk-clan of the same Omahas. Totems will protect, or at least not injure, their clients. The Senegambian Scorpion-clan say that scorpions will run all over their bodies without biting them. All sorts of external marks—special plaits of hair, tattooing, branding, knocking out of teeth—manifest one's connection with a particular totem. At birth, adolescence, marriage, death, special commemorations are made. When a South Slavonian child is born, an old woman cries out, "A she-wolf has littered a he-wolf"; the child is *drawn through* a wolf-skin; a piece of a wolf's eye and heart is sown into its dress; sometimes it is named Wolf. The dying members of the Buffalo (Black Shoulder) clan of the Omahas are dressed in buffalo-skin, have their faces painted with the buffalo symbol, and are told: "You are going to the animals; you are going to the ancestors; be strong." It would be quite out of place to describe at length the social complications based upon this idea. Though in Australia and (especially North) America, totemism is very prevalent, yet a very strong reaction is taking place against reading it into Semitic or the classical religions. M. Toutain, in an important paper read at the Oxford Congress, 1908, asserted that it was a key which would open but few doors. M. Salomon Reinach beat an astonishing retreat in his presidential address. Orphism, no less than totemism, declared this erstwhile champion of that theory, had become *a hobby, and an overridden hobby too*!

As for the *fetish*, it is even less necessary to offer many illustrations. Anything will serve the purpose;

there is no limit to the possible instances. Thus the negro of Guinea will take the first remarkable object that he notices on going out—a feather, a twig, a claw; if he succeeds in his enterprise, whatever it be, he forthwith worships it; else, he throws it away, stamps on it, spits on it, abuses it violently. Our cult of horse-shoes, of crooked sixpences, of odds and ends kept "for luck," is not so very far, after all, from having some connection with this old superstition.

Cult of the Dead: Ancestor-worship, Ghosts, etc.

The religious sentiment may, again, attach itself to a certain class of *men*: the ancestors of the family or clan, the illustrious dead belonging to the tribe, to chiefs or kings. They are considered, either in their images or in their persons, as depositaries of some formidable and superhuman power, and are treated with proportionate respect. A subsidiary category of intermediate vague beings may further be evolved—genii, spirits, disembodied souls, imps and fairies, whose behaviour, malevolent or useful, is regarded as highly efficacious, and gives rise to all sorts of superstitious and, so to say, infra-religious actions. Whatever be the object of the Religious Sense, around that object a whole network of defences, precautions, and prohibitions (*taboos*) forms itself; and it is through these that the fear and respect finds its expression.

Ancestor worship, though of comparatively little religious importance, was yet, in ancient Greece, for instance, of the very highest social moment. The clan-worship of the ancestral hero from which the clan took its name, was the strongest possible bond of unity among its members; often a hostile unit would find itself thus set up within the State. The great reformer Kleisthenes was obliged violently to

abolish the traditional worship and establish new and arbitrary cults in its place. We are assured that the semi-divine worship paid to dead ancestors in China is directly responsible for a very remarkable perfection of family-life in the country parts of that great Empire. The Roman process of *adoption* was so solemn and complicated an affair, chiefly because the adopted man had to abandon his family cult and undertake a new one.

Magic

Finally, on the lowest plane of conceptions, related indeed to Religion, yet not deserving of the name of religions, are to be detected some very widespread beliefs which constitute *magic*. Starting from the notion that certain formidable and considerable forces, which are, none the less, susceptible of compulsion, reside in certain objects or certain specified persons, Magic undertakes the task of capturing these forces, of exorcising them, of coercing them by incantations, adjurations, operations, which—if they are but performed according to the rules—infallibly produce the desired result. The object of this magical cult is therefore treated without respect and without any love. It is feared as the receptacle of a powerful Force, no doubt, but in no way considered as good, supreme, or divine. The sentiments entertained towards it are therefore different in essence and in principle from the true religious sentiment, whatever be the truth of the case for those amalgams which are produced by the perversions of the root-ideas.

It follows, however, that anyone who makes a careful study of the ways of managing these forces acquires an enormous reputation in his tribe, as one all-powerful for good or evil, according as he checks, or refuses to hinder, or actually stimulates, the malignant forces. In one Australian tribe it is

thought that the sorcerer can enter the body of whom he will: another magician can, however, draw him out in the shape of a stone spear-head or splinter of quartz. The North American *medicine man* mingles literal and salutary doctoring with spells and incantations; he can scare devils away with rattles, and suck them out of wounds or blow them in with a blow-pipe. The Central and West African *mganga* is the rain-maker; this sort of magic is often *sympathetic, i.e.* an action is performed which is in some way connected in appearance with what is desired to happen; *e.g.*, you ritually eat a cake baked of that sort of grain which you wish to be particularly plentiful: to obtain rain you make a splashing in water. The imagination of savages is often hopelessly and completely a prey to the blind terrors which these cruel beliefs foster; there is scarcely any limit to their disastrous effects.

All the religious forms and all the conceptions which we have just described and summarily classified are to be found, in various degrees, in all known peoples. *Humanity*, taken as a whole, is *religious*. "All men need the gods," said Homer, nearly three millenniums ago.

"That there never was a time in the history of man when he was without religion . . . . is a proposition the falsity of which some writers have endeavoured to demonstrate by producing savage peoples alleged to have no religious ideas whatever. This point we have no intention of discussing, because, as every anthropologist knows, it has now gone to the limbo of dead controversies. Writers approaching the subject from such different points of view as Professor Tylor, Max Müller, Ratzel, de Quatrefages, Waitz, Gerland, Peschel, all agree that there are no races, however rude, which are destitute of all ideas of religion.[1] That our modern society contains a certain number of men who live without hope and without God, is doubtless due to that 'positive' education which supplies them with the *immediate explanation*, the *secondary causes* of facts, and thus checks for a time the natural and imperative effort of their souls towards the *Ultimate* End and *First* Cause. And their sub-

[1] F. B. Jevons, *An Introduction to the History of Religion*. London, 1896, p. 7.

stitution of the Unknowable, the Infinite, the All, Science, Humanity, for *God*, and their not infrequent lapse into *superstition* (*e.g.* neo-Buddhism, Christian Science) proves that the idea of God is rather *falsified* than *lacking* in them.

III. Natural and Revealed Religion

The relations of man, as an individual and in social life, with the Divinity, belong to Natural or Revealed religion according as they are conceived as necessarily issuing from the nature of things, or as the result of an initiative, an immediate intervention of the Divinity. In fact, as Newman already noticed,[1] the second element is far predominant in the religions as they exist in fact.

However, we must notice that all religions present, in juxtaposition and indissolubly united, elements which must be connected on the one hand with natural religion, and on the other, with a Divine revelation (real, that is, or at least held to be such).

Thus, in the Moral order, we discover, in all peoples alike, alongside of the precepts of natural morality, and of certain primal duties put under the sanction, and inviting, if violated, the retaliation of the Divinity, other precepts, other duties, superadded by the expressed will of God (or of the gods). Certain actions are held to be forbidden, because bad in themselves (*e.g.* adultery, murder, theft); and others are held evil because positively forbidden (*e.g.* the touching of sacred objects, the burning of beeswax, the eating of beans, etc.).

In the *order of Worship and of recognized dependence*, the same holds good: prayer of praise and adoration, of petition and of thanksgiving; sacrifice; offerings, more or less complete and costly, of various objects the consecration or destruction of which is destined to recognize the sovereign dominion of God, or to put the worshipper into close relation with Him, are conceived sometimes as due to and issuing from the

[1] J. H. Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, Part II. c. iv. § 3. Longmans, 1903, p. 96.

necessary order of things, but more usually as directly instituted, imposed, demanded by God (or the gods).

In the *Order of Beliefs* one might group under natural religion all credence which attributes to the Divinity the origin and government of the universe, and Providence in all its dealings with Humanity. To revealed religion would belong the beliefs which have regard to the more intimate nature, the number, the genealogy, the interventions of the Divine (covenants, theophanies, initiation, sacred books, prophetism), and those which touch on certain systems, or conditions of salvation (redemption, expiation).

The notion of the *sacred*—places, times, things, and persons—can disregard the distinction set forth above. Besides, though that distinction was based upon facts and is useful for systematizing our religious conceptions, yet it is familiar (and even this familiarity requires much qualification) only to peoples which have grown accustomed to philosophical reflection. In almost all other groups the elements of natural and of revealed religion are inextricably intertwined, though with the elements of Revelation (real or fancied) predominant.

With all these elements, with all these religious phenomena—and here *religious* is taken in its widest possible sense—the relatively recent science of the *History*, or *Comparative History*, *of Religions*, is concerned.

IV

The Comparative History of Religions

During long centuries, indeed, the study of religions other than Christianity (or than the religion of the people of Israel) was considered either as mere food for curiosity, which the letters and reports of missionaries and explorers might to some degree

supply, or else as a dependant of literary sciences, and thus mythology might be studied for the better understanding of the ancient authors of Greece or Rome. When any portion of Christendom entered into a prolonged or intimate relation with peoples who professed these alien religions, a corresponding stirring of curiosity in their regard made itself felt, stimulated by apologetic or missionary considerations. Thus, for instance, did the Christians of Spain and of the East come to study the religion of Mohammed. But all this activity, which was at times very considerable, was sporadic, and subordinated to aims other than the study of non-Christian religions in and for themselves.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the French polygrapher Dupuis compiled an enormous collection[1] in which he instituted a comparison of all the religions then known, in order to assign their common origin to the cult of the heavenly bodies. In the nineteenth century, the revival of classical studies on the one hand, and on the other the adoption of a far more severe *critical method* (verification and comparison of facts; publication of texts and of ancient records) prepared material for a new and independent science, which was assisted by the prevalent phænomenalist philosophy with its notion of *Becoming* (later to be called *Evolution*). A great number of thinkers came, in fact, to consider all religions to be but the progressive manifestations of a single religious sentiment, incarnate, from age to age, in these various manifestations, according to the need and stage of culture of the several peoples among whom they appeared.

On their side, Catholic Traditionalists, from very

[1] F. Dupuis, *De l'Origine de tous les Cultes*, 3 vols. 4to, with an Atlas, Paris, 1795. Notice that by a quaint return of the wheel of chance, the Panbabylonian school of Germany, H. Winckler, A. Jeremias, etc., is proposing once again Astrolatry as the original force in all religion.

different motives, eagerly sought, in every nation and in every age, for traces of a primitive tradition.[1]

This intellectual movement assisted by the gigantic progress achieved in our knowledge of ancient or distant peoples—expressing itself in collections, museums, search for and publication of texts, deciphering of languages scientific expeditions, etc.—brought about the constitution of the new science which put before itself *as its single aim the comparative study of religions.*

Two men especially contributed to the formation of the new school. In Holland, the Remonstrant (Arminian) pastor, Cornelis P. Tiele, after having published some important studies on the Mazdaean religion (1864) and the comparative religions of Egypt and Mesopotamia (1869), finally produced (1876) under the title of *A History of Religion to the Coming of the Universalist Religions*, what was, in fact, the first manual of the Comparative History of Religion. This short handbook was translated into the leading languages. And when the law of 1st October 1877, instigated by the doctrinal anarchy of Dutch Protestantism, transformed the chairs of Dogmatic Theology in the four Dutch Universities into chairs

[1] Their work was done, no doubt, with noticeable lack of method and exact scholarship; still, the *Études Philosophiques sur le Christianisme* of Aug. Nicolas ran to thirty editions, was widely translated, and was well known to Newman. Regular lectures on the History of Religion were given at the Institut Catholique of Paris by the Abbé de Broglie from the January of 1880 till his death, anticipating thus the establishment of the first regular chair, occupied by A. Réville at the Collège de France, and of the Section of Religious Sciences at the École des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne. M. de Broglie's *Problèmes et Conclusions de l'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1886, achieved wide popularity; and the munificent gift by Pope Pius X. of 100,000 francs to the Institut Catholique of Paris, applied as it has been to the establishment of a chair for the History of Religions, has crowned his work. A series published by G. Beauchesne, Paris, contains already four volumes of high merit by recognized specialists—*Savage Religions* (Leroy), *Islam* (C. de Vaux) *Buddhism* (de la V. Poussin), *Egypt* (Virey). On all questions connected with the religions of non-civilized peoples, *cf.* the international review *Anthropos*, edited by Fr. Schmidt, and published in several languages. A very full bibliography is published with it.

of History of Religions, Tiele was the first to be named occupant of that of Leyden.

In England the field was better prepared for the rapid growth of the infant science; the vastness of the British Empire, the treasures contained in the collections accumulated in the metropolis, above all, the possession of India, could not but provoke, sooner or later, a movement in this direction. Yet the initiation of the movement and its direction for forty years are to be assigned to a German scholar, Friedrich Max Müller, born at Dessau in 1823. A pupil of Bopp at Berlin, and of Eugène Burnouf at Paris, Max Müller was called to England, and much important Indian research was assigned to his care. His edition of the *Rig-Veda* (1846–1850) established his reputation as an Indian scholar, and he became Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford. With a real erudition, Max Müller combined eminent qualities of style, of organization, and of initiative. His brilliant and ingenious *Essays*, united in four series under the name of *Chips from a German Workshop*, took the leading opinions by storm, not only in England, but on the Continent. The greatest service, however, which Max Müller rendered to the Science of Religions was the Collection of which he assumed the direction, and which published, in fifty volumes, the English translation, enriched by lengthy and erudite introductions, of the *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford, 1878–1905).

The movement thus set going by Max Müller gradually made headway in the United Kingdom. In 1876 the trustees of the *Hibbert Fund*, destined to maintain poor scholars during their theological studies, decided to secularize the moneys thus placed at their disposal. Part of the proceeds were employed in the giving of *Lectures* on the History of Religions. They were inaugurated by Max Müller in 1878. About the same time a Scotchman, Mr Gifford, founded, by

will, four Chairs of History of Religions in the Universities of Scotland.

In France the progress of the new science was slower: the admirable works of Burnouf on the religions of India, of Rémusat and St. Julien on those of China, had no doubt prepared the way for it; but the thoughts of few only turned towards a *Comparative* history of religions. In 1876, however, M. E. Guimet, a rich merchant of Lyons, accumulated, during his travels in the Far East, a magnificent collection of documents and objects which bore upon religion. This collection, which was immediately enriched by private gifts, was placed in a special museum, subsidized by the State. Conferences, publication of texts, an important Review (which has maintained its prime importance in our subject) were elements in a remarkable whole. Finally, in 1879, the secularization of the Faculties of Catholic Theology was voted on the motion of Paul Bert; and in their place, and animated by a frankly anti-catholic spirit, a Section of "Religious Sciences" was established in the School of Hautes-Études at the Sorbonne. At the present moment this section comprises no less than fifteen chairs, without counting those recently founded in the Universities of Paris and Lyons, for the *comparative* study of religions.

In Germany the foundation of special chairs was long in coming, as was the publication of special books. The best known German manual, by Chantepie de la Saussaye, included, in its first edition, only two Germans in a list of ten collaborators. But the Science of Religions, in all its parts and at all its stages, owes much to scholars such as Th. Nöldecke and I. Goldziher; F. von Richthofen and J. H. Plath; H. Brugsch and G. Ebers; H. Oldenberg and G. Bühler—I quote but a few illustrious names.

In the other European countries, chairs of History of Religions have been founded from 1884 onwards;

at Brussels, *e.g.*, held by Goblet d'Alviella; and at Rome, in 1886, by B. Labanca, etc.

Special Congresses have brought together the principal scholars who are interested in this subject. At first the religious aspect predominated; the believers in each several creed put forth expositions of an apologetic character in its favour, with the result that the advocates of non-Christian faiths usually took Christianity as an ideal type to which they claimed to show that their own system approximated. The first and best known congress of this sort was that of Chicago in 1893. Its directors published a detailed account of it under the rather ambitious title, *The World's Parliament of Religions.* Since then, Congresses of a purely scientific character — or such, at least, it was their aim to be—have followed one another every four years: the first was held in 1900 at Paris; the second at Bâle in 1904; the third was held at Oxford in September 1908. The development of the Science of Religions can be measured by the fact that it was necessary to create no less than nine different sections to find place for all the works presented to the Congress at Oxford.

At this Congress it was, moreover, possible to take stock of the real and actual condition of the science of religions. It might be compared to the groups of separate buildings which are often found in semi-civilized countries, girt by a common cincture-wall which assures to the collection a sort of purely artificial and wholly material unity. Some of the buildings are, as it were, autonomous; the main architectural features of their designs are fixed; the walls rise on firm foundations, but at their side you can see building-plots encumbered with unworked or half-worked material, with which chance-come architects run up at haphazard grotesque edifices that last but for a day, that crumble and collapse before they are even finished. Above all, no general plan: nothing

save a certain outlook common to all their constructions, and a certain remote similarity in the building materials—nothing, I say, to reduce to unity this immense agglomeration. Thus, of the nine sections which divided the labour at the Oxford Congress, a few (those of the "Religions of India," of "Classical Antiquity") had to do with numerous, classified, and well-interpreted documents, and with scholars well equipped and already unanimous on many points; but the rest (that, *e.g.*, of the Religions of non-civilized peoples, and especially that of general methodology) found themselves face to face with fragile hypotheses, improvised systems, disputable documents, divergent definitions; and that to such a point that it was impossible to agree on the very name that should be given to the new science. Are we to speak of Hierology, or of Hierography? Are we to construct the History, or the *Comparative History*, of Religions?[1]

V

Causes of the Uncertainties and Divergences in the Study of Religion

Now these differences of opinion afford no cause for astonishment. In all that touches upon documents, verification of the existence or relation of the facts which are to serve as basis for the science of religions, we cannot but observe that no other subject-matter offers such opportunities for vague and arbitrary hypothesis. For is it not our business, in this science, to ascertain the innermost feelings, the ultimate convictions, of men usually separated from us by millions of leagues in space, by centuries in time, by mental habits and hereditary customs which form a wholly

[1] See the articles of Fr. F. Bouvier, "La Science comparée des religions, comment elle se fait et se défait," *Études*, 20th November and 5th December 1908. (The Making and Unmaking of the Comparative Science of Religion.)

alien outlook upon life? Here evidence is scanty, there superabundant, but always written in a language difficult to translate, alluding to mental or social phases long since vanished, presupposing a liturgical or a practical commentary for lack of which the document loses any definite value and signification. Dates float here and there to the surface; between the isolated hints great gaps yawn. And if it be so for peoples in possession of a religious literature, even when it is of considerable dimensions, what must we think of the case of uncivilized folks? Experience shows that they can be made to say pretty well what one wants them to say. Essentially jealous in their guard over their secrets, distrustful of the traveller who comes to question them, incapable, as a rule, of explaining correctly the rites, the initiations, the customs, on which they have never reflected, savages frequently deceive a questioner deliberately, and almost always from sheer inability to express themselves.

But this is merely the most inevitable, not the most abundant, source of misapprehension and of divergence of view among religious historians. The differences of the *methods* according to which they group and systematize, schedule and comment upon facts, cleave them into hostile camps.

The constant opposition of the strictly *historical* method, as it is called, to the *hypothetic reconstructions* of history named "comparative," was especially noticeable at the Oxford Congress. The first of these two methods confines itself to the classification of facts; the best interpretation of documents possible in the circumstances; the prudent bringing to light, in the last resort, of a few general conclusions when the subject-matter admits of this; but it makes no attempt to bridge gaps, to offer general views; or, by analogy or by guesswork, to fill up the interstices in fragmentary descriptions, and vividly to visualize our hazy ideas of the ancient religions. The second method

and beyond all doubt far the more fascinating and, unluckily, far the more popular, consists in comparing, in order to throw light from the one upon the other, religious practices, stories, rituals, borrowed from all ages, all peoples, all stages of civilization alike. No one would dream of condemning this method *en bloc*, for if used with discretion it can afford notable and interesting, if not conclusive, results. But this is not how the apostles of Comparative Religion interpret their rôle! Greatly daring, they conclude from a similarity to an identity; from a distant analogy to historical interdependence. Without adverting to the dissimilarities, the profound divergences which often exist in the letter, and almost always in the spirit, of opposing cults—arbitrarily isolating from the general mass (which gives them their proper and distinctive value) a few features which, *in this isolated state*, it is easy to compare with analogous features elsewhere—these scholars construct a series of frameworks within which the facts must, willy-nilly, fit themselves. Any which resist are left to one side, or whittled down, or disputed; anyhow reduced to the state of negligible quantities.

In this way are obtained imposing but purely conjectural reconstructions, which, naturally, cannot be harmonized one with another. According to the dominant element which has been selected as fundamental religious category by each several author, an entirely new construction is raised, differing totally from everything which has preceded it. For some years *Animism* was the key which was to open every lock, the master-word which should solve all enigmas. And this system, set up especially by E. B. Tylor, putting the notion of soul, of spirit, of "double," at the base of all religion, has still a few partizans. Next, the studies of J. G. Frazer, of Spencer and Gillen on the Australian tribes, the early works of Andrew Lang, brought about the triumph of *Magic* and

Totemism. A reaction, which came quite recently to light at the Oxford Congress, had already been for some time indicated, and was due in part to the influence of Mr. Andrew Lang, who had been led, by a more objective course of study, very considerably to alter his opinions. But the spirit of systematization is unwearied; to-day, accepting as its leaders the most adventurous of German Assyriologists, it finds the origin of all religion in the *Cult of the Heavenly Bodies.* Hugo Winckler, Paul Jensen, Stücken, have become the authors of the hour.[1]

We do not, we repeat, condemn as merely contemptible the hasty generalizations of a youthful science, excited by its own delightful prospects of discovery. Its own progress will correct, and has already corrected, many of its own faults. The Canadian professor (not a Catholic), Dr. Jordan, reminds us[2] that the very science which was "airily summoned" to witness to the fundamental similarity between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism, proved the "most remorseless critic" of this theory. Renan's inquiries led him to say that the Semitic deserts were "monotheist": further research shows they were no such thing, and leaves Israel in solitary possession of the pure worship of One God. Still, in a matter where the fundamental problems of the soul's life and death are involved, we may justifiably protest, and bitterly, against the reckless formation of distinctive theories and revolutionary hypotheses. On the other hand, since, as Aristotle said, "All things make one music with the Truth," it is quite impossible that an

[1] Dr. Sanday, in his presidential address, with his characteristic genial sarcasm, declared that the uncritical and agile imaginations of these scholars were responsible for constructions built on the "principles" made classic by Fluellen:

"There is a river in Macedon, and there is also moreover a river in Monmouth. . . . 'Tis so like as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both."

[2] *Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth*, p. 411.

honest study of the History of Religion should prove anything but a most valuable bulwark to Apologetics. To develop this point is, however, not our object in this paper.

It is certainly remarkable that these arbitrary constructions which collapse, from their intrinsic weakness, beneath the impact of facts, borrow severally their directive ideas and dominant *motifs* from the individual line of study peculiar to the ingenious scholar who puts them up. The trait which has most struck or which best flatters the learned man in that corner of the world of religion of which he has compiled an inventory, becomes for him the light which enlightens all the religious life of all humanity, the foot-rule which measures its sphere of energy, the *vital essence* which is at the origin of all existence.

For it is precisely in this question of the *origin*, and, thereby, in that of the real and profound value of religion, that the historians and archæologists and ethnographers and philosophers who give themselves up to the comparative study of Religion are fundamentally and above all other things interested. How splendid a dream it is, by means of a mere juxtaposition of all historically known religion, to find oneself thus enabled to exclude all specific qualities peculiar to each, and so to discover the common groundwork, to isolate the quintessence which shall prove to be, unqualified and unmodified, *religion*! And yet, even to begin to try to realize this dream, nay, even to decide that it can at all be realized, one must have already chosen one's side; for not only every general conclusion, but every first attempt to classify, to co-ordinate, to organize in a coherent system the fact-matter that the evidence supplies, *presupposes, and is dictated by, a necessary acceptance or rejection of some or other first principles of philosophy or method.* The moment a man has made choice of his first principles of judgement, he ceases to be able

to collect raw facts, with a view to group and criticize them, explain one by another, and so finally to interpret their meaning: whether the scholar knows it or not, wants it or not, those fixed first principles of his, that first general philosophy, are all the while influencing him.

"For," says the well-known non-Catholic writer, Dr. Illingworth, "however anxious a man may be to get at the bare facts of past history, he can only understand them by bringing them into relation with his own mind; and this is not an empty mind, but a mind already furnished with personal categories and a content of its own, and disposed therefore to look at things in a particular way. He must of necessity, therefore, read this mental character into any new facts that are brought before him, estimate them by its canons, appropriate, assimilate them, turning them round as it were, till he can see them in the light of his own habitual modes of thought."[1]

It is absolutely essential to be clear about that: we here touch upon the root-reason which divides the historians of religions into irreducible groups.

Now let us try to be clear as to how it can possibly happen that men, placed face to face with the self-same facts—and facts, notice, which are the most overwhelming, and fundamental, and transcendent, and essentially knit up with human destiny—how it can happen, I repeat, that these men arrive at perfectly contradictory conclusions. Obviously only one of these contradictory conclusions can be wholly true; but if this conclusion appears to involve first principles and conceptions considered *a priori* to be erroneous and intolerable, the inquirer will experiment with the others before consenting to submit his mind to the first.

And precisely here, to conclude, is the danger for a Christian who may be off his guard in this respect when he starts on a course of reading upon the

[1] J. R. Illingworth, *Reason and Revelation.* London, 1902, p. 96.

comparative history of Religions. If the books he reads are written, as constantly happens, by—I will not say sectarians with axes to grind—but by rationalists of moderate temper and in perfectly good faith, he will find the religious facts which are described in them, set out, grouped, and interpreted on rationalistic lines.

Hence the supreme importance of realizing, before even approaching the "Study of Religions," these fundamental differences in principle and method.

VI

Rationalist Method and Principle in Religious History

Obedient to the notions about God, the universe, and the relation of the one to the other, to which he has committed himself—

i. The logical rationalist does not admit that there has been, or *can have been*, any revelation in the full and real sense of the word—that is to say, immediate communication between a personal and transcendent God and humanity. The utmost he can do is to allow "Revelation" to be the name given to the results of that Divine Force, immanent in the world and in humanity, which leads all that exists into another phase of existence, or (but this is itself a hypothesis which by no means everyone admits) towards a final Goal.

ii. He asserts that exactly as does everything else which this immanent divine action stimulates, so does religious progress, "revelation," move by way of an *evolution* strictly so-called, from the less to the more, the lower to the higher, starting from primitive animality, and equably in the same direction (allowing for occasional *reversions*).

iii. He maintains, in consequence, that all religion, all forms taken by the Religious Sense, whereof the

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object is *either ideal, or* at least *unknowable*, are in an order of progressive elevation.

In conformity with these directing principles, the method of the rationalist historian of religion will consist in—

(*a*). Reconstituting, step by step, the primitive condition of things; rediscovering, from beneath the successive stages of progress, the first and fundamental expression of the Religious Sense; and in isolating the cell wherefrom has issued forth all subsequent religious development:

(*b*). Tracing the course, and describing the vicissitudes, of the evolution of religions in human history. To arrive at this end, no pains are spared either to eliminate the "personal" characteristics of each religion, when the residue will prove the religious sense in its infancy, or to examine into the nature of this sense by studying it in those who approximate nearest to primitive man, *i.e.* in savages.

On these *methods* of procedure, the following comments may be made. The first (*a*) lies open to indefinitely numerous *subjective* errors: each scholar verifies everywhere, as common groundwork, what *he* holds to be the fundamental religious element. C. P. Tiele sees *spirits*; J. G. Frazer, *magic*; W. Robertson Smith, *totems* and *blood-alliance*; Guyau and Durkheim detect the *social instinct*; and H. Hubert, the idea of "*sacredness*"!

The second method (*b*) rests on a delusion, for the savage, far from being "primitive man," is often a degenerate, and above all, from the point of view of civilization, a "spoilt specimen"; his religious and social customs, far from being simple, are extremely complicated; but for reasons inherent either in his race or in his environment, the development which they indicate has gone crooked.[1]

[1] *Cp.* Fr. J. M. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques.* Paris, 1905, p. 5 *sqq.*

As for the *principles*, it is clear that they are *a priori*, but that, once admitted, they naturally and necessarily incline the mind to judge of facts in a certain way, to view them at a particular angle: all facts, for instance, which should seem to contradict the law of evolution will be minimized, explained away, and, when necessary, suppressed. Similarly it becomes a duty to hunt for an explanation of the religion of Israel and of Christianity which shall be immanent and purely natural.

It is not our business in this paper to discuss these principles, and to show how faulty is their foundation, but to make it clearly understood how they act upon the presentation of facts even by a rationalist author in perfectly good faith and of first-rate erudition.

VII

Attitude of Catholics towards the History of Religions

Catholics approach the study of Religions without these philosophical pre-conceptions. Convinced of the existence of God, One, both Father and Providence of the human race, knowing as positive fact that this God can enter into direct relation with His rational creatures, Catholics never deny *a priori* the facts alleged by the Religions that divide humanity between them. They know, by an historical tradition of which the foundations are assured, that God has really and truly intervened; that having spoken of old in the Prophets, He has finally spoken in a Son.[1] As guarantee of this fact they have the fulfilment of prophecies, the record of miracles, the superhuman holiness of the Son of God, and the permanent witness given to the world by the Holy Ghost: the Catholic Church herself, one, holy, indefectible, fruitful of

[1] Epistle to the Hebrews, i. 1.

infinite benefits, capable of inaugurating and carrying to perfection, within and through herself, the reformation and the moral and religious restoration of Humanity. At peace in this his faith, which is at once reasonable and meritorious, and whose mysteries transcend without stultifying his reason, the Catholic can study without fear the religions which are different from what he knows to be the one true faith.

Outside this religion—Patriarchal, Israelitish, or Christian and Catholic—he knows that there are men who "grope after" in the dark what he holds to firmly in the relative light of faith; men adoring as "unknown"[1] the God whose glad tidings have been announced to him; and whom he recognizes when he cries "Our Father, who art in heaven."

He knows, again, that the relics of the primitive truths still subsist among these peoples, and are transmitted, mingled with innumerable and appalling superstition, from generation to generation.

He knows that these peoples have souls no less than the Christians have, and experience desires and religious aspirations built on the same plan, destined to the same end. He cannot marvel, in consequence, when he sees that these desires and these aspirations translate themselves into institutions and sentiments and rituals analogous to his own. What he seeks, and assuredly finds, in Christian dogma, rite, sacrament, those others seek it too, though they cannot fully find it, and reach out and strain after something, at least, to supply for that great mercy which they have not received:—

Or rather: *which they have not received in all its Fulness.*

For, in the last place, the Catholic is aware that just as there is no salvation for one who "sins against the light," and voluntarily separates himself from the

[1] Acts xvii. 22 and following verses.

Catholic Unity which he has once realized to be divine, even so—

"Those who, labouring under an invincible ignorance with regard to our holy religion, faithfully follow the precepts of the natural law graven by God on the hearts of all, and, ready to obey God, lead a good and upright life, can, by virtue of the Divine light and of grace [of which they are ignorant], acquire eternal life. For God who sees, examines, and penetrates to the bottom of the spirit, the soul, the thoughts, and the habits of every man—God, infinitely good and merciful, by no means suffers that any [adult] should be punished by eternal penalties if he have not to answer for a voluntary fault."[1]

Strong in their principles, and careful to sift the good grain of fact from the chaff of interpretation and polemical exposition; proud to belong to a Church, as to a religion, which "wants nothing but the Truth," Catholics can approach fearlessly, and especially in books which have not suffered from the influence of the rationalist principles described above, the *Study of Religions.*

[1] Encyclical of Pius IX., *Quanto conficiamur*, Aug. 10, 1863. Denzinger, Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, ed. 10, n. 1677.

THE RELIGION OF CHINA

From the French of

L. WIEGER, S.J.

I

ORIGINS

ABOUT the year 3000 B.C., or somewhat later, there came from the West a tribe which founded in the basin of the Yellow River the state since become the Chinese Empire. According to the learned Professor Terrien de Lacouperie it came straight from the banks of the Euphrates, bringing from Chaldea its religion and civilization. This theory, however, is not yet established fact.

HISTORICAL PERIOD.—In any case, at their entry into history, towards the year 2698, the Chinese appear as a people distinct, relatively not numerous, possessed of its own customs, and established in small groups among aborigines of manners differing from their own. The Chinese venerated Heaven and the Manes or Spirits of the Dead, while the aborigines were fetishists. This is all that is known of Chinese origins.

II

BEFORE THE CHOU DYNASTY

For the historical period which extends from the twenty-fourth to the twelfth century before Christ,—

a period at first of elective emperors, and later of the Hsia and Shang-Yin dynasties,—the following are the notions preserved for us in the Odes (Shih-ching) and the Annals (Shu-ching), the sole existing documents.

PRIMITIVE RELIGION.—1. GOD.—Over all the Chinese set a Supreme Being whom they called Sublime Heaven, Heaven, Sublime Ruler, or Ruler. These four terms of the ancient texts are, by the consent of all the commentators, strictly and perfectly synonymous. Heaven, the Sublime Ruler, gives, preserves, and takes away existence. He is the author of human relations, of duties, and of laws. He is not regardless of men, and He is their judge. He rewards and punishes according to merit and demerit. From Him come want and abundance, adversity and prosperity. The Emperor is His mandatory on earth, and Heaven predestines him from afar, preparing beforehand through long ages its elect one. Heaven directs and overrules every issue. Now, given these attributes, it is impossible to admit that the ancient Chinese considered Heaven as a material vault, and the Sublime Ruler as an ancient hero. This interpretation would be irreconcilable with the texts, their commentaries, and all tradition.

Cultus.—The worship rendered to Heaven, to the Sublime Ruler, was simple and expressive. Victims were immolated to Him, ordinarily an ox. Greater happenings they made known to Him by kindling a pyre on the crest of a mountain. The smoke which rose from this fire was thought to carry their communication to Heaven, and they were much disquieted with anxieties as to whether Heaven was pleased or displeased, favourably or unfavourably disposed.

Divination.—For this reason they were constantly examining atmospheric phenomena and the celestial

bodies, whose aspect and movement they interpreted for good or ill.

Besides this, tortoise-shells were scorched and conjectures drawn from the form of the cracks thus produced. The idea which governed the choice of this latter mode of divination is quite intelligible: the arched dorsal carapace of the tortoise was a figure of Heaven, its flat ventral plate was a figure of earth, the animal between the two represented mankind. They wished to know the ways of Heaven, say the texts: what Heaven was preparing for Earth, what the Sublime Ruler desired of men.

2. TRANSCENDENT BEINGS.—From the same epoch certain transcendent beings were the objects of a secondary worship. The texts enumerate the Shen of Heaven, and the Ch'i of earth, especially those of mountains and rivers, the patrons of lands and those of harvests, etc. They were the Manes of illustrious men, ancient benefactors honoured as protectors—a particular case of the general worship paid by the ancient Chinese to the souls of the dead.

3. THE DEAD.—This cultus of the dead was the great business, the concern which claimed the living's every care. The survival of the human soul was generally and firmly believed. A celebrated text of the year 1400 (Annals, ch. P'an-keng) speaks at length of the celestial elysium, of the effects of ancestral blessings and curses. On the other hand, in the few pages that have reached us, no allusion is made to a judgement after death, to a Purgatory or to a Hell.

Ritual of the Dead.—A tablet of wood served as a medium between the departed and his descendants; before it food, drink and certain stuffs were offered to the dead. When all was ready his presence was invited by the declamation of addresses, the chanting of odes, and by a hubbub of bells and drums. Not that anyone thought he would come, eat, drink or clothe himself; it was only hoped that

the ancestor, informed of the trouble that his descendants had given themselves to do him honour, would give them his blessing and send them happiness. Nevertheless they spoke and acted as though hoping that the departed would come and taste the offerings. "Pure ritual fiction," say the commentators. The children were urged by their hearts to do something for their father, but what was to be done to please him in the other world? Not knowing, they did the thing which used to please him once in this world. "The human heart is so made," say the classical commentators cited below, "that when it knows that its desires are irrealizable, it allows itself for consolation the illusion of representing them realized." To give still more life to this effigy-realization, on very solemn occasions a direct descendant was vested in the clothes of the deceased, which had been piously preserved, and about this dumb representative the ritual pantomime was played. It was to this living medium that the food, drink, and songs were offered (Commentaries of K'ung-ying-ta, of Ch'en-hao, of Fan-ch'u-i, of Yen-ts'an, of Chou-ch'ang-nien and others, on the Odes of the Shang dynasty).

SUMMARY.—The primitive religion of the Chinese was, then, a monotheism. That is indubitable. The primitive worship was addressed to the Lord of the World, to the Judge of men, to God. The ancients never made a figure of the Sublime Ruler; ancient China knew no idols. The men whom it venerated were placed in a category apart, far beneath the Sublime Ruler.

CRITICISMS.—1. *Imperial Monopoly of Higher Religion.*—What follows is less satisfactory. From the beginning the higher cults were a governmental monopoly. The Emperor alone communicated with the Sublime Ruler, and the functionaries venerated the transcendent beings of their own districts. The proper religion of private persons was the worship

of their living parents and of their dead ancestors. For them to attempt communication with Heaven was a criminal usurpation, and was punished as such. It was enough that the Emperor prayed for his people.

2. *Vagueness of the Moral System.*—The second vice of the primitive religion was the vagueness of its moral teaching and the fact that morality descended from parents and governors rather than from the Supreme Being. Man must do what is right for the sake of pleasing his parents, for the sake of appearing well in the eyes of the authorities. He must avoid evil to save his parents from affliction, and himself from chastisements. Without doubt the ancient texts say that the Sublime Ruler sees and judges, that the good shall be happy, the evil unhappy. But they do not define what is good and evil, nor do they say anything clear of the Divinity's judgements, or of the nature of the final sanction.

3. *Superstition in the Cult of the Dead.*—Lastly, although the cult of the dead was not superstitious in its origin, with its exaggerated realism it was fatally sure to conduce to superstition before long, which failed not to happen.

III

Under the Chou Dynasty

In 1122 the Shang-Yin dynasty was overthrown by the Chou, who occupied the imperial throne of China for more than eight centuries. The texts of the Odes and of the Annals, texts both numerous and clear, show that during the first half of this period beliefs remained the same as in preceding ages.

Innovations and Alterations.—Some innovations and alterations, however, which were made at this epoch had grave consequences later. It is a law that the spores of error, mixed with truth, always end

by producing a bad fermentation. Let us briefly mention the chief of these germs of decadence.

1. *Divination.*—Two new systems of divination, one by numbers, the other by diagrams, were introduced at the beginning of the dynasty. The first is expounded in the chapter *Hung-fan* of the Annals. The manual of the second is the celebrated book called *Changes* (I-King). These novelties were at first intended to search out the ways of Heaven, as was the tortoise-divination of which I have spoken above, but later they degenerated into superstitions.

2. *Astrology.*—Official astrology and meteorology, considerably developed at the same epoch, also degenerated afterwards into superstitious practices, as is shown by the chapter *T'ien-Kuan* of the Historic Memoirs (*Shi-Chi*) of Izuma-ch'ien.

3. *Aboriginal Fetishism.*—To these internal causes, external ones were added. First of all there was the contamination of the Chinese theists by the aboriginal fetishists, whom the Chinese absorbed in great numbers during this period. Hence came sorcery, the official existence of which can be established from the Chou-li ritual of this dynasty. The Chinese historians are unanimously agreed that it was borrowed from the aborigines.

4. *Foreign Religions.*—Then came the importation of Avestic and Brahmanic ideas, which corrupted the primitive monotheism and simple cosmogony of the ancients.

5. *Incipient Polytheism.*—To the Sublime Ruler were given different names after the different regions of space; and of what was at first a mere matter of names, a distinction of the reason, the sect of Taoists will, in the sequel, be bent upon making a real distinction, thus multiplying the Supreme Being.

6. *Incipient Pantheism.*—A dualistic system (two principles or alternate stadia of matter, *yin* and *yang*, repose and action) was invoked to explain the genesis

of the universe—a purely philosophical explanation from which the Taoist sect will derive later on its pantheistic system.

That these innovations had not from the first the sense and import that the Taoists sought to give them later is beyond doubt, as has been magisterially proved by the most celebrated Chinese litterati, K'sang-hang, Wang-su, and others. We must be satisfied with one quotation relative to the Sublime Ruler:—

"Man, who is one, acts by four members. The Sublime Ruler, who is One, acts in the five regions. When one considers His greatness, one calls Him Sublime. Because He dwells in Heaven one calls Him Azured. As over all, one calls Him Heaven. As governing all, one calls Him Ruler. So, when speaking of the five Rulers, one must take care not to understand five distinct persons. The term Five Rulers expresses the one action of this Ruler in the five realms of space."

The Chinese are not a metaphysical people, and the motive of these distinctions was originally neither metaphysical nor theoretical, but entirely practical. The Emperor alone had the right of sacrificing to the Sublime Ruler, and during the decadence of the Chou the great schismatic feudatories made an effort to usurp this imperial prerogative. None of them, however, dared completely to appropriate the Sublime Ruler, the Emperor's Divinity, so they distinguished in Him *Five* Rulers—the regions of space numbering five in the Chinese quinary system.

INCREASED DECADENCE.—During the period named Ch'un-Ch'in, the eighth to the fifth centuries before Christ, the decadence was accentuated. Monotheism always remained, but the divinity put on forms more and more anthropomorphic. The old transcendent beings, too, and the noble Manes get more and more vulgar. They eat and drink; they even put on animal forms. Their category is enlarged to receive mis-

chievous beings of foreign extraction—undines, dryads, and others, who are remarkably like Indian Nagas. The primitive notion of the ordinary Manes is also changed. Survival is believed more strongly than ever, and the dead appear, admonish, bless, and curse. But they, too, have learned to eat and drink, and that so well that if they be not nourished they suffer from hunger, steal food, and avenge themselves on their negligent offspring. The other world comes more and more to be figured as similar to this one, as peopled by rich and poor, and above all by miserable starvelings identical with the Pretas of India. The people see phantoms everywhere. Hunger after death is the great fear.

SUTTEEISM.—In 678 and 589 appeared certain cases of Sutteeism—men, women, horses and chariots sent into the other world with their dead master (Iso-chuan). The thing will subsequently become customary; thus, when some good or bad fortune occurs to a great family, a faithful servant commits suicide to carry the news to the ancestors in Hades.

PSYCHOLOGY.—In 535 the quality of the human soul is affirmed for the first time (Iso-chuan). The inferior soul *p'ai*, which animates the body and directs the vegetative operations, issues from the first embryonic matter. After birth, the superior soul *hun* is formed in man little by little, by the condensation in him of the air he breathes. At death the lower soul follows the corpse to the tomb, when, after a longer or shorter interval, it finally becomes extinct. The higher soul is not extinguished, but after its separation from the body it is more or less transcendent, wise, and powerful according to the degree in which it has been well educated and nourished during life. If its descendants make the ritual offerings liberally, it will keep quiet; if not, it will be troublesome. The lower soul also can do mischief until it is extinct.

This theory, invented by the philosopher Izu-ch'an, has served as the foundation of Chinese psychology from the sixth century B.C. to our own days. We shall see later that the philosopher Chu-hsi and his disciples wanted to reduce the superior soul also to an ephemeral survival, but the Chinese people never adopted this system of materialism. It still believes in two souls, one of which is extinguished in the tomb by degrees, while the other and higher soul becomes reincarnate—a Buddhist addition to the ancient dogma.

IV

End of the Chou

At the beginning of the sixth century B.C. two men appeared whose names have dominated Chinese thought ever since. These were Lao-tzu and Confucius. The view which is at present most common makes of these two men contemporaries. Lao-tzu was finishing his life at the time of Confucius' début. They saw and did not understand one another. It could not have been otherwise, for their views were diametrically opposed. Modern Chinese critics have summed them up wonderfully well in these few words: "Toward the end of the Chou dynasty the ancient beliefs and institutions were no better than a ruin. Lao-tzu wished to clear them all away, and then to build up something completely new. Confucius wanted to restore, piously and scrupulously, the antique edifice. Lao-tzu the theorist soared into the clouds: Confucius the practical clung to the earth."

1. System of Lao-tzu.—Lao-tzu was a philosopher. His system was a kind of pantheism. Everything is composed of two elements: *tao*, the primordial principle, the All, Unity, the Force which evolves in two periods, *yin* and *yang*, progression and retro-

gression; and *ch'i*, the primordial breath or subtle matter, the substratum of the evolutions, of the progressions and retrogressions. The Principle had no principal. It was always, and of itself. It was before the Sublime Ruler, the God of that primitive religion which is here rejected *en bloc* in favour of this unique dogma. *Tao* produces every being by its action on breath, and then beings appear, move about a little on the world-scene, and then retire to hide in the mysterious side-scenes, and there to rest. Life is nothing: what follows it is everything. To await in peace the lasting repose beyond the tombs is wisdom; to spend life in toil for anything whatsoever is folly.

Application.—From these theoretic principles spring, as practical application, quietude and abstention. Let the wheel go round; nothing matters, nothing lasts. Why be restless and uneasy? Seeing, hearing, tasting, desire, are so many wearinesses and illusions; wise is he who despises them, who abstains from them, who is withdrawn from them. Instead of becoming well-informed, it is one's duty to empty oneself, for action contradicts the natural course of things. Every law and rule shackles Nature; but to follow innate instinct, that is the way. Governments should apply these principles to their people. Isolating their subjects, they should keep them in the most absolute ignorance and so quench in them all ambition and desire. "Empty the head, fill the belly; weaken the spirit, and strengthen the bones. To instruct the people is to ruin the state. . . ." Let us add that Lao-tzu cursed war with his utmost energy. The sum of these principles, which is contained in the Tao-tei-ching, has had a prodigious influence in China. It is the source of all those political treatises which are summed up in this—that the people must be kept ignorant and well fed. To it is due the administrative system of abstention and expectation

which has been in force until our own times, which gives to everything a free course, interferes only under necessity, and then reluctantly, and, so far as possible, puts never a finger into the gear of natural causation from fear of deranging the works. Lastly, from it comes the horror for war and the contempt for the military profession.

Taoist Psychology.—Lao-tzu's ideas on the human soul and its survival are somewhat noteworthy. "Man is able to reach that perfection which was contained by the vital principle in the seed which gave him birth, and which survives its separation from the body. By feeding the vital principle on air, by means of peaceful and regular respiration, he can conceive in himself the embryo of its future state, as the hen conceives its egg. The embryo is represented as a small babe nimbed by a glory. To become viable, it should reach the weight of seven ounces, when it exteriorizes itself by meditation and dreams. After death it transmigrates into the other world: the corpse which remains is a worn-out garment, a cast-off habit. . . ." Here we have the origin of the Taoist alchemy, and also of the respiratory gymnastic,—practices intended to nourish the vital principle (Tao-tei-ching).

2. System of Confucius.—Confucius was a politician, who speculated on nothing, and even reproved all abstract speculation, all transcendental research. He did not even admit an abstract morality. For him everything is concrete, everything looks to the formation of a practical governing and a submissive governed class. His motive was twofold: reaction against the administrative abuses of the feudal princes, and the repulse of the theories propounded by contemporary innovators. He thought with the ancients and believed as they did; for proof is the fact that it is he who has, by compiling the Odes and the Annals, saved for us all that remains of them. Like the ancients again he believed in Heaven, in the Sublime

Ruler, in a Providence, and he proved his faith by word and deed. Confucius was with the ancients also in his belief in divination; to know the Ways of Heaven he cultivated the "Changes." He firmly believed with the ancients in the survival of the human soul, but remained absolutely dumb in regard to other-worldly sanctions. He believed with his ancestors in the transcendent beings, and preached their omnipresence to the end that men might behave well at all times and in all places. He believed in the Manes and energetically insisted on their cult, which he interpreted reasonably. But reacting directly against the new superstitious beliefs and practices, he wished the cult rendered to Heaven, the Transcendent Beings and the Manes, to be strictly limited to the ancient practices, to be sober, and rather respectful than tender, since respect, a thing of the intellect, is less exposed to error than sentiment, a thing of the heart. If he made no frontal attack on the dualism of Lao-tzu it was because he was too little of a philosopher to be able to refute it, but he repelled or diminished its practical conclusions.

Loyalty and Kindness.—His ethics, Confucius has himself summed up in two words: Loyalty and Kindness.

Politics.—He also wished to procure for the people well-being before everything, but for him the almost bestial breeding encouraged by Lao-tzu was not enough. He required the governors to have them instructed (but only in their duties and things necessary) by means of aphorisms, without proofs or reasons. The people should be preserved with the greatest care from all other than this official teaching.

Confucius detested arms and war almost as much as Lao-tzu.

The two formulas, "Family Constitution" and "Opportunism from day to day," became the characteristic traits of his system.

The Family.—Confucius insisted with a deliberate exaggeration and intensity on filial piety, goodness of parents towards children, and devotion of children to their parents. For him the family was the molecular type. The principality, the empire, and the world, aggregations of molecules, ought to live and function as great families. Confucius hoped to see an edict which would shape the state in explanation and exemplification of this family code. The dream of his life, an irrealizable Utopia, was that all should return to the age when men, few as yet, lived under the government of the father of the family. He would never believe that this gentle rule would no longer suffice for great masses.

The Mean.—Opportunism is the true mark of a disciple of Confucius, the device of his school. "Opportunism is the distinctive trait of the sage; excess and default are two equally damnable vices. Every preconceived plan, all taking of sides in advance, is an evil. A middle way which passes between the two extremes must be taken in everything. One must go forward with a determined intention to embrace nothing with passion, repulse nothing with antipathy, but do whatever appears fitting for the moment and in the given case, in due measure and proportion" (Li-chi and Chung-yung).

These words of the Master have made Confucian China the China of the litterati. They inculcate an inert and apathetic opportunism which has no place for the ideal, for patriotism, plan, programme or politics, for love or hatred. Their message is rather, "Dip when the wave comes, breathe again when it has passed, and so on for ever."

The Confucianist reaction piqued the votaries of Lao-tzu. Disciples developed the principles of the two masters, and in this way grew up Taoism and Confucianism, bodies of doctrine to which we must studiously refuse the name of religion, seeing that

they were political systems based on a little natural philosophy, one of which denied God theoretically, while the other prescinded from Him in practice.

V

Anarchy

In the year 213 B.C. the Emperor Shih-huang of the Ch'in, the destroyer of the Chou and the conqueror of the empire, grew so tired of the censures which the Confucians passed against all his acts as contrary to antiquity, that he had all the ancient books destroyed, and abandoned himself to the Taoists.

The emperors of the two dynasties Han (B.C. 202–A.D. 220) were also Taoists in the main.

Buddhism.—One of them, in A.D. 65, introduced into China the Buddhism of India, which at first met with no success in its propaganda, and for several centuries remained a mere curiosity. The Confucians were constantly in ill-favour during the whole of this period. Then came the Ch'in dynasty, fourth to sixth centuries after Christ, a period of bloody wars, during which all Northern China fell into the hands of foreigners, Tunguzes, Huns, Tangutans, Tibetans. It was these barbarians who, from political motives, propagated Buddhism in China with so much success that at the beginning of the fifth century "all the north of China," to quote the official historian, T'ung-chien-Kang-mu, "was covered with pagodas; bonzes were to be counted by thousands, and among the people nine out of every ten families were Buddhist." Soon Southern China followed the example of the north, and by the beginning of the sixth century the whole of China was officially Buddhist, while Taoism was prohibited on account of the revolutionary tendencies of its votaries, and Confucianism was forgotten because of the dryness of its doctrine.

MAZDEISM, MANICHEISM, NESTORIANISM, MUHAMMEDANISM, JUDAISM.— After the ephemeral Sui dynasty came the T'ang (seventh to tenth centuries), who played a most interesting game of political see-saw between the different doctrines. Buddhists and Taoists, who were still at heart attached to their old patrons, were treated as subjects. Mazdeism from Persia was favoured. Manicheism from Turkestan was tolerated. Muhammedanism was introduced, and Indian Jews settled at the ports open to foreign commerce. The celebrated T'ai-tsung, a typical T'ang emperor, patronized each of the cults and practised none of them. The capital of the T'ang was an international bazaar of religions. This dynasty, however, was overthrown in 907, when the barbarians invaded China anew; a passing calm was produced, and then the Sung dynasty ascended the throne.

VI

UNDER THE SUNG DYNASTY

The reign of this dynasty is famous for the invention of two systems—new forms of Taoism and Confucianism which exist to our own day. These are Chinese Shinto and the Neo-Confucianism of Chu-hsi.

1. CHINESE SHINTO.— In preceding ages the Chinese had given Confucianism and Buddhism to the Japanese: now Japan repaid China. In 984 the Japanese bonze Tiao-jan presented a *History of Japan* to the Emperor of China, T'ai-tsung, and expounded Japanese Shinto to him.

Shinto is an ensemble of fables which credited the imperial and noble families with a descent from ancient divinized heroes. It was a revelation to the Emperor, who admired it much, says the official history, and conceived a strong desire of being not less divine

than his Japanese contemporary. Death gave him no time to realize his project, but his son, the Emperor Chen-tsung, gave effect to it and so created Chinese Shintoism. He gained the support of the Taoists, then under a cloud, and they repaid him for the unlooked-for return of favour by an absolute devotion to his ideals.

In 1008 Chen-tsung began to have visions and revelations, which he attributed to a divinity, the Pure August One, the supposed ancestor of his family. In 1015 he declared by decree that the new divinity was none other than the Sublime Ruler of the ancient books. The Emperor was, therefore, Son of God like the Mikado. A crowd of ancient personages composed the court of the Pure August One. The Taoists became priests and preachers of the new State religion, and the Buddhists were summoned to enter into the bosom of the new Church. The Imperial Court became a fairyland. Ministers, officers, ladies of the harem, were there no longer: all were descendants or reincarnations of genii of either sex. The invasion of the Chin Tunguzes, who by a surprise attack conquered all northern China, put an end to their follies, but the system lived on in modern Taoism, called Heroic Taoism or Chinese Shinto.

2. NEO-CONFUCIANISM.—Driven southward of the Blue River, the Sung meditated on Confucianism, which for some thousands of years had been forgotten. The meditations that they made on this venerable subject produced, not peace, but yet another war.

Even before the Christian era the litterati had already defaced considerably the old notions which were the legacy of Confucius and the ancients. Rarity of texts, all of which were manuscript, favoured these alterations, but from the tenth century after Christ the diffusion of wood-engraving allowed them to be more easily read and compared. At the same time, the translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka into Chinese

revealed the systems of the Indian philosophical schools. The desire for a criticism and a systematization of the doctrines which were called Confucian, grew in many souls, and several persons set themselves to the task. But their action determined a reaction, and Confucianists split into two camps, Reactionaries and Progressists, who waged bitter war upon one another throughout the twelfth century.

Reactionaries and Progressists.—The reactionaries demanded a return, pure and simple, to the letter of the ancient text, and the abandonment of all commentaries, which, they said, had falsified the Master's teaching. The Progressists, on the contrary, imbued with Indian philosophy, were for adding new commentaries by which the propositions scattered through the text might be systematized into an accessible body of doctrine. The standard-bearer of the Progressists was the too famous Chu-hsi.

The fight was envenomed in the extreme. Each party appealed to the Imperial authority, "the secular arm." Politics inclined the Emperor Hsiao-tsung towards the Reactionaries, who profited by this to crush their adversaries. In 1178 they obtained the following decree:—"Abandoning the text of the classics, the litterati now occupy themselves with abstract philosophy alone, and pass their time in disputing about intangible notions in unintelligible terms. In future let them be content to learn the traditional interpretation, and let them try to behave themselves well." Fallen into complete disgrace, placed under the surveillance of the police, dishonoured and persecuted, Chu-hsi died in 1200; but in 1227, by one of those turns of the wheel so frequent in China, the Emperor Li-tsung, of the same dynasty as Hsiao-tsung, became infatuated with Chu-hsi's lucubrations, and honoured him with the diploma of Grand Master, Authentic Exegete and Ideal Classic.

The Sung thus made a bad use of the momentary respite which was left to it by the death of Genghis Khan, for on the eve of its disappearance that dynasty bequeathed to China a pestilence.

Modern critics define the work of Chu-hsi thus: "Having established the rôle played by Indian philosophy in the Buddhist books, he invented a Chinese philosophy to explain the Confucian books. Until then China had possessed no philosophy; we have to thank Chu-hsi for filling this lacuna." But the unhappy man who endeavoured to destroy his country's faith in God and the survival of the soul, and proposed to an immense people the doctrine of absolute atheism and a materialistic monism just tinged with dynamism, does not deserve the thanks of his country, but is rather to be ranked among those guilty of high treason against humanity.

VII

The System of Chu-hsi

The system of Chu-hsi, which has remained the official philosophy in China to our own days, is ordinarily called the doctrine of the litterati, because the modern litterati, with very few exceptions, have adopted it. It may be summed up as follows:—

Whatever the ancients may have said, there is no God, no Ruler, no Judge, and no Providence. The Universe, and every being it contains, is composed of two co-eternal, infinite, distinct but inseparable principles—*li*, which is norm, and *ch'i*, which is matter. Inherent in matter, norm is the principle of being, of life, and of all action and evolution. Matter is the subtraction of the norm, the principle of diversity among species and distinction between individuals. Under the impulse of norm, matter evolves in two alternate phases, *yin* and *yang*. The norm is also

called *t'ai-chi*, the Great Axle, because it moves everything, and *wu-chi*, because it is imperceptible. It is one, infinite, eternal, immoveable, unalterable, homogeneous, necessary, blind, fatal, unconscious, and unintelligible; it is ever one and the same, but it has its term in every being. The limited portion of matter, which constitutes the individuality of a thing, holds a certain finite degree of the norm, so long as the individual exists, and so limits the universal norm, but the latter withdraws into the All (from which it was never separated) at the moment when the individual ceases to exist in consequence of an alteration of its matter. The vanity of things is due to the share of matter that each individual receives, which may be more or less fine or gross, perceptible or inert under the influence of the norm. Beings spring from the great All and return into it again as the buckets of a noria come up from the well and go down again, for the wheel of evolution also turns a chain without end.

PSYCHOLOGY.—The two souls of man are both material, the higher as well as the lower. They are produced by condensation, and are ultimately dissipated, as the smoke vanishes when the fire is put out. "The immortality of the soul," Chu-hsi repeated a hundred times, "is a Buddhist error." "It is with the soul as with a fruit which grows mellow, then overripe, and finally decomposes. When a man has been wise, lived to the proper term of life, and died happily, his soul, already overripe, forthwith decomposes. Such were those cultivated sages who never appeared again after their decease, for they died just at the right moment, and were as fruit which decomposed immediately. For the unripe, on the contrary, dissolution is not immediate. The souls of those who died before the time, or who have meditated too much, like the bonzes, are tough and stringy. They are the cause of apparitions and ghosts—ephemeral survivals

that do not last. The souls of the ancestors no longer exist, whatever the old books may say, but the worship given them by their descendants is a mere profession of gratitude for the act of generation by which the ancestor transmitted life to his offspring. The generations of men are as waves of the sea; each wave is itself, but all are made of the same water. I who exist to-day am a mode of universal norm and matter, and my ancestor was also in his time a mode of the same elements.

"He is no longer, but the elements remain, and I am in communion with him by norm and matter. In the same way Heaven, Earth, and all things, being composed of norm and matter, are one with me; I can even call Heaven my Father, Earth my Mother, and every being my brother, for all are united to me; the whole Universe is with me one only Being."

Norm is unconscious, matter is unintelligent, but in man the material heart, moved by the norm, produces intelligence, perception and morality. Intelligence flashes from matter as sparks from a flint, and the flashes cause a vibration of the composite nature, which is emotion.

ETHICS.—When the emotions, and the actions which follow them, are in keeping with natural propriety, they are good; otherwise they are—not evil, for evil has no existence, but—non-good, by reason of excess or deficit.

In different beings the norm shows different hues, which are the proper qualities and virtues of a thing. Thus in man the norm expands in goodness, equity, deference, prudence and loyalty; if the expansion is imperfect it is only because the impurities of matter have stopped its action.

CHU-HSI AND HAECKEL.—At first sight the system that is most strikingly recalled by Chu-hsi's philosophy is Schelling's naturalistic pantheism, but this is an illusion due to some of his images. A thorough

examination of his definitions obliges us to conclude that the system of Chu-hsi is inferior to pantheism. In its composition of force and matter it is analogous, if not identical, with Haeckel's system of "Kraft und Stoff" (Force and Matter).

VIII

Reign of the Litterati

With the fall of the Sung beneath the onslaught of the Mongols begins the modern age of China, a period which embraces the Yuan, Ming, and Ch'ing dynasties, and the years from 1280 to 1905. It may be called the reign of the Neo-Confucianist litterati, as the examinations which gave access to all public offices were from this time in their hands.

The Yuan.—From the first appearance of the Mongol dynasty, called the Yuan, numerous litterati held office, and faithfully served the foreigners. To reward them, the founder of the Kubilai dynasty had temples erected to Confucius throughout the whole extent of his Sino-Mongolic empire. The Emperor Wo-Tsung offered him incense. The Emperor Yen-Tsung presented him with a crown composed of all the works written by Neo-Confucianist authors, and decreed that in public examinations the matter of the compositions, which was always taken from the classical books, should be, besides, in accordance with the commentaries of Chu-hsi.

The Ming.—When the Chinese dynasty Ming, the founder of which was a Buddhist, had replaced the Yuan, naturally enough the Buddhists were in great glory, but not for long. The position of the litterati was too strong; they kept the examinations and official dignities in their power, and at their request the Emperor Ch'eng-tsu had the Hsing-li-ta-ch'uan compiled, the great Neo-Confucian philosophy

which was thenceforth taught in all schools by order of a decree issued in 1416.

THE CHING.—Finally the Manchu Tartars overthrew the Ming and founded the Ching dynasty, and then began the golden age of the litterati. The Imperial family which is reigning at the present day is Buddhist born, but for 290 years past all its favours have been for the litterati, who served it well, saved it more than once, and made it a sharer in their loves and hatreds. In 1865 the suppression of the T'ai-p'ing rebels by the litterati, who took up arms for the occasion, carried the caste to the zenith of favour. In 1894 an Imperial decree censured Mao-ch'i-ling, the celebrated antagonist of Chu-hsi, and once more ordered all official examiners "to conform scrupulously to the established law, to venerate the commentaries of Chu-hsi equally with the text of Confucius, and to accept no dissertation containing opinions differing from his."

Six years later came the Boxer rebellion, and this time it was the diplomatic litterati who rescued the dynasty. The shock, however, had taught the Government that literature is not everything, and on the 2nd of September 1905 the old system of examinations was abolished by decree. For the moment it looked as if the ruin of the caste was accomplished, and that a new era had opened. This was not so by any manner of means, for after fluttering for some time round Herbert Spencer, the Pekin monitors have returned to Confucius as interpreted by Chu-hsi. If the form of the examinations is modified, the old spirit remains. The new is even likely to become worse than the old,—more atheist, materialist, xenophobe, and anti-christian. Hostility to Christianity is, as it were, the characteristic note of up-to-date Neo-Confucianism, which is not surprising, for between a materialism and spiritual system there is indeed a contradiction.

IX

Epilogue

It is clear from all that precedes that to call Confucianism the religion of China is an abuse of terms. The religion of China dates from the origin of China. The Emperor still sacrifices to Heaven, twenty centuries after Christ, as his predecessors sacrificed to it twenty centuries before Christ. The great merit of Confucius is to have preserved for us in his collections—Odes, Annals and Rites—those ancient traditions which were violated, many centuries later, by the Master's pseudo-disciples Chu-hsi and the rest. So much, then, for the official religion.

Private religion China has never possessed, and it was this which made the success of Buddhism for a thousand years. The Chinese learned from Buddhism a sound morality and the use of prayer. With its eminent good sense and practicality, the people fused into one the old theistic doctrine of their nation and the moral teaching of India, addressing the prayers to the God of conscience, Lao-t'ien-ye, the venerable Lord of Heaven, He who sees and judges, punishes and rewards. But it has never been able to rid itself of a thousand and one little superstitions.

It will have been remarked that the litterati were not, as has been sometimes said, the faithful guardians of the old traditions. It is a mistake to consider them as a public institution. In every age they have been a private coterie of retardatory and reactionary politicians, a closed caste, almost a secret society, perpetuating their order by the education of the young, by co-operation, and by intermarriages.

Spread everywhere, everywhere a society apart, ever dreaming of the return to the prehistoric, Utopian, incorrigible, disagreeable critics, they have been now caressed from motives of interest, now persecuted for their insolence, most often ignored, and never

loved. Generally speaking, the Chinese dynasties were hostile to them. It was under the two foreign dynasties, the Mongolian and the Manchu, that they made the best of their position. It is they who ruined the ancient traditions. "Why," said the celebrated Muhammedan, litteratus Liu-chih-chieh (Canton, 1710), "why this ceaseless lamentation that the true doctrine is lost? It is you who have lost it!"

THE CULT OF CONFUCIUS. — In regard to Confucius, the litterati had great trouble in hoisting this idol into the position which it occupies to-day, and they owe their success to various emperors (some of them barbarians and infidels) who were under obligations to them, or their dupes. It was a slow and laborious promotion. In 442, nearly a thousand years after his death, a Taoist emperor raised a temple to the sage near his tomb. In 473 a Tonguz king ennobled his family. In 505 a Buddhist emperor raised a temple to him at the capital. In 637 a minister who believed in nothing put his image in the schools. In 665 an emperor who practised no religion conferred the title "Supreme Master" upon him. In 739 a Taoist emperor accorded to him the rank of king, and made him a court of his ennobled disciples. In 932 a Turkish emperor had his books engraved for the first time. In 1013 a Taoist emperor conferred on him the title of "Perfect Sage." In 1048 the Imperial Robe was (rather fraudulently) conceded to him. I have mentioned above the favours granted to him by Mongolian emperors. In 1907 the Manchu Government put him on the same rank as Heaven. At present, in the schools and universally, his cult is insisted in more than ever, and this not at all from devotion, but as a convenient engine of war.

CHRISTIANITY. — The Christians are suspect of sympathy with foreigners. Now, Christians are forbidden to prostrate themselves before the sage, and

the pagans knowing this, exact the prostration from students, from candidates, and from functionaries, as a profession of paganism and nationalism. It is the shibboleth of hatred against foreigners. The question as put to-day is "Christ or Confucius," but the formula is not absolutely exact, for the Confucianism of Confucius is not essentially opposed to Christianity. Quite different is the case of the Neo-Confucianism of Chu-hsi. With him all conciliation is impossible, as it is between light and darkness, spirit and matter. For three centuries Christianity has hurled itself, not against the opposition of a good people made for Christianity, but against the besotted caste of atheist litterati. If this opposition has taken on in later times a less violent form, it is only the more implacable at bottom. The true antithesis is Jesus or Chu-hsi, Christian or litterati, salvation by humility or perdition by pride.

This tract has been entirely drawn from original sources, by a missionary who has dedicated twenty-one years to the study of the Chinese books. Many of the books written on these matters in the past are out of date, and many recent works are untrustworthy. The following may be consulted with advantage:—

Ph. Couplet, S.J., *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus.*
J. Legge, *Chinese Classics and the Religions of China.*
A. Zottoli, S.J., *Cursus litteraturae sinicae.*
Ed. Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques de Sema-t'sien.*
Ch. de Harlez, various tracts and articles.
S. Couvreur, S.J., *Classiques chinois.*
J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China.*
St. Le Gall, S.J., *Tchou-hi.*
H. Havret, S.J., *Stèle de Si-ngan-fou et T'ien-tchou*, and other numbers of the *Variétés sinologiques.*
Terrien de Lacouperie, *Babylonia and China*, and other tracts and articles.
L. Wieger, S.J., *Textes historiques, Textes philosophiques, Folk-lore chinois, Morale et Usages, Narrations populaires*, etc.

APPENDIX

On "The Gods"

(For Buddhism, *see* Section IV.)

The Buddhism of China is greatly different from the classical Buddhism best known in Europe. It reverts to the religion natural to man—is theistic. It is bad Buddhism, but, perhaps, better religion.

"The Gods."—Many Buddhas are adored in China, *e.g.*, *Maitreya*, the loving one, the future Buddha; *Amita*, Lord of the Western Heaven; *Fousa Kuayin* (Avalokitesvara), praised in the Lotus of the True Law, the best-known Scripture of Northern Buddhism. The multiplication of Buddhas may be outlined thus[1]: From Ādi-Buddha, Supreme Being, emanate Transcendent Buddhas, entranced in heavenly worlds of Idea; from them the Bodhisatwas, Buddhas Elect, waiting in Heaven; from these the material world, wherein Buddhas are manifested as men. There are infinite such trinities, but to this age (Kalpa) five only; ours is the fourth: Amita, Avalokitesvara, Gotama. A further complication is that Heavenly Buddhas are incarnate in Lamas, Kutuktus, and saints, *e.g.* in the Dalai Lama, and in Fousa Kuayin, a Chinese princess, "the goddess of mercy." Thus, "Buddhas are many as the sands of nine Ganges."

The Superior of Mongolian Buddhism is the Kutuktu of Urga, a holy city on the ravine of the Tola, inhabited by 10,000 lamas.

In China proper the Emperor is a divine representative; and a Japanese Buddhist—for this sort of theology is elastic—can say that for certain souls "every being in the universe, be it the earth, or a piece of brick, or a fence-post, performs the work of a Buddha," and that all things are the Body of Buddha.[2]

[1] So Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*.

[2] M. Anesaki, at the Oxford Congress of Religions, held in September 1908.

DÆMONS.—Buddhism not only evolved divinities from within, it is conciliatory and hospitable to the gods without. In the Middle Kingdom itself it is in close alliance with Taoism, to minister to the Asiatic craving for gods many and lords many, unsatisfied by Confucianism.

Elsewhere it fuses with Shamanism or Dæmonism. 1. *Mongolia.* Owing, perhaps, to the gentle influence of Buddhism, this very simple and very pious shepherd folk differ strikingly from the Muhammedan nomads. Every family has its priest; it is even said that one in three of the population is a lama. But the mild Buddha is not supreme. A sudden stone or tree on the monotonous steppe still startles to worship, and to offerings of a tuft of camels' hair; and there are darker idols, *e.g.*, the Yaman-dag [1] or goat face, a sombre blue idol with horned head, coroneted with human skulls, grasping in his twenty hands instruments of torture or human limbs.

2. From another traveller one may quote a Tibetan example:[2] "Even the purest Gelugpa Lama on awaking every morning must coerce the demon-king into investing him with his own dreadful guise, that so the smaller demons leave him unharmed."

3. But the Shamanism universal in North Asia (Ostiaks, Samoyedes, Buriats) is most developed in Korea. Since the disestablishment of Buddhism five centuries ago, Korea[3] has been almost religionless —unique among civilized nations. In remote parts indeed, beautiful monasteries exist, such as the Temple of Eternal Rest and forty-five other sanctuaries and monasteries among the gorges of the Diamond Mountains; but within the walls of Seoul, the capital, there is not one temple.

[1] So described by A. Colquhoun, *The Overland to China*, p. 303.
[2] Dr. Waddell, quoted in *Exploration in the Himalayas*, W. M. Conway, p. 607.
[3] The following facts are from Mrs. Bishop's *Korea*, esp. vol. ii., chaps. xxxiv., xxxv.

Shamanism is named from its ministers, of whom are two classes:—

1. The *Pan-su*, blind men, exorcists who never propitiate evil spirits, but compel them to reveal by the movements of a stick their identity and name, bottle the name (with the daemon), and bury it.

2. The *Mu-tang*, mostly women, render service and worship to the spirits, good or bad. On receiving a call by dreams and nervous illnesses, a woman fills a room with flowers for her spirit's abode, and prepares herself by rites for three years, and by fasting. Her duties include the celebration of feasts, impersonations of dæmons and ancestors, dedications of children to the spirits.

"DÆMONIUM."—Among nature spirits are those of East, West, South, North and Mid Heaven, whose fetish is a pole carved at the top into a rude human likeness; mountain spirits, evidenced by a boulder or bag of stones with, for *ex votos*, rags, old shoes, or a little rice. Tigers are their servants and representatives. Dragons—water-spirits—receive sacrifice for the souls of the drowned by sea and river-side.

Gnarled trees are inhabited by the souls of those who died by pestilence, killed by a tiger, in childbirth, by the wayside, or before reaching a cycle—60 years.

The *Shin-chang* is a spirit-army of 80,000; the *Tok-gabi* a horde of the violently slain.

Of the house spirits, chief is he of the Ridge-pole; others are spirits of the kitchen, house-site, gate, furniture, family, wealth, and the triune spirit of birth. Their fetishes may be only a paper bag or a flower-pot with some rice.

Every accident and disease is a dæmon, notably smallpox, who is feasted on his appearance, and the smallpox patient is worshipped.

About eighty per cent. of the dæmons are reckoned malign; the rest, *e.g.*, the house spirit, if duly honoured, are well disposed.

Chinese Calendar[1]

(The Chinese mostly interpret their divinities euhemeristically—as deified mortals. They are probably right in the main. The following, for instance, from the *Pekin Gazette*, 1878, shows a typical modern process of deification.[2] A memorial petitions that a girl who has frequently given rain in answer to prayer may enjoy the spring and autumn sacrifices. An official enquiry is made; a report shows that on earth she was dutiful and religious, and refused to marry. The petition is therefore granted by the Board of Ceremonies.)

New Year (new moon about the end of January). —Through the night, vigils are kept before ancestral altars, men visit neighbouring temples, all officials visit temples of the Emperor, and later those of—

Man-chang, god of literature and school-boys, whose names and conduct he marks in a book; on earth a person of famous learning and virtue.

Kwan-te, a distinguished general A.D. 3, now god of war; for eight centuries not deified, but to-day honoured with a temple in almost every city, and a statue on almost every family altar. The last emperor but two raised him to the same rank as Confucius.

2nd day.—The following receive official worship: 1. *Lung-wong*, the dragon king, a rain god. (Another rain god, the Pearly Emperor, was a royal prince.) 2. *Shing-wong*, protector of walled cities. Formerly his rank was inferior to that of a governor-general, and his temple gates were closed whenever His Excellency passed in procession. 3. *Wind and fire gods.* 4. *The Queen of Heaven.* During her lifetime, when seemingly in a trance, she is said to have saved her brother, a merchant, from drowning on a distant sea. Patroness of sailors.

[1] Mostly after Gray's *China*, esp. vol. i. chaps. iv., v., xi.
[2] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, 2nd series, ch. ii.

4th to 7th.—Feast of Apo, goddess of marriage.

Second Month: *1st*, Birthday of Tsung-Kwung Wong, judge of the first of the ten Buddhist Hells.

2nd, Too-tee, god of wealth, represented, with an ingot of gold in his hand, at the entrance of most streets in southern China.

18th, Birthday of the *goddess of mercy*, a Buddhist divinity, obscurely identical with the Bodhisatwa Avalokitesvara. To her Buddhist nuns are said to take their vows; she has a chapel in most Chinese Buddhist temples; Patroness of the dead.

Third Month: *3rd, Chaong-tze*, a purification festival of rivers and fountains.

23rd, Birthday of the Queen of Heaven.

Fifth Month: *5th, Dragon-Boat Festival.*—Wat-Yuen, 500 B.C., a very virtuous minister, served a profligate prince of Cho, who ultimately dismissed and degraded him. After composing an ode, he flung himself into the waters of the Meklo. On this day, on nearly every river or creek in China, is the "searching for Wat-Yuen" in long dragon-boats brilliant with flags and the beating of gongs.

On the same day, Feast of the Middle Heaven.

16th, Fast, called the "Meeting of Heaven and Earth." The streets are, or were, placarded with exhortations to fasting and continence.

Seventh Month: *1st to 15th, Feast of the Dead Poor.*—In the evening lanterns are suspended from trees and houses, tapers in hundreds line streets and highways, paper clothes and money, paper houses and servants are burned and so conveyed to the Dead. Flower-boats glide down the rivers carrying Taoist priests who chant prayers for the drowned, and frequent floating lights are borne past by the rapid current—all this to lighten the darkness of the unfriended souls of the poor, and of the wandering drowned.

7th, The Seven Stars (The Pleiades).—They are

seven sisters. Once the youngest was sent by the gods to this world, and while here she loved a cowherd. When in time she was recalled to the sky, a sudden shower of rain fell—the tears of the disconsolate star. Before long the cowherd died heartbroken. He became the constellation separated from the Seven Stars by the Milky Way, and once a year on this day he may bridge the Milky Way and pass over—a lovely myth, more Greek than Chinese. The seven goddesses are patronesses of maidens' embroidery. On the eve of the feast tables are heaped with silks to be burned in sacrifice at the second midnight; miniature flowery bridges join the tables; minute lamps glow amongst flowers, sweets and rice-plant.

24*th*, *Birthday of Shing-wong*.—At midnight the Prefect vests his statue in new garments provided by great families.

Eighth Month: 15*th*, *The Moon*.—Miss Carl has a charming account of a festival of the Harvest Moon celebrated in the Summer Palace, Pekin:—". . . . on the Marble Terrace beneath the Temple of the Ten Thousand Buddhas, bathed in the rays of the softly glowing moon, with the glory of the setting sun still in the west, stood the altar decorated with the usual pyramids of fruits, floral offerings, and flagons of wine, and the pai-lou of chrysanthemums, inscribed in white blooms: 'To the Glory of the Pure and Chaste Celestial Orb.'" [1]

16*th*, *Fast*, as above.

25*th*, The Sun.

Ninth Month: 1*st to* 9*th*, Fast of atonement for past sins in honour of the Nine Stars (Cerberus).

9*th*, A feast in the mountains in memory of a miraculous intervention of genii.

Other gods are: *Pih-te*, a culture-god, and Patron of Tradesmen. Once incarnate of a Chinese queen,

[1] *With the Dowager Empress of China*, p. 158 (condensed).

he dwelt in the mountains for five centuries, and ascended into Heaven in a chariot of nine colours.

Kum-fa, goddess of women and children (*fl. c.* 1465 A.D.), with her twenty attendants, who teach infants to smile, to eat, to walk, etc. (*cf.* the Roman *Numina*, Lecture 13, p. 4.)

The *Transcendent Beings*, spirits of land and grain (p. 3), of clouds, rain, and thunder, of the four seas, the five mountains, the four rivers, etc. The five genii of the elements—earth, air, fire, metal and wood —are patrons of health. In the 4th month devotees visit these temples in thanksgiving for restored health, wearing the dress and chains of prisoners in token of abasement.

CELTIC RELIGION

By John MacNeill,
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The Celts, a branch of the great Indo-European linguistic stock, are first known to history as the chief people of Central Europe. Their country was the high middle region whence issue the Danube, the Rhone, the Rhine, and the Elbe. In early times, when the plains of Europe were covered with forest and swamp, these great rivers were highways of transcontinental commerce; the high watershed was rich in metals and in salt mines; and thus the advantage of position enabled the ancient Celts to make great advances in industrial civilization and in the arts. The extent of early Celtic civilization has only become known in recent times through the archæological discoveries at Hallstadt in Upper Austria, La Tène in Switzerland, and other ancient centres. In the time of the Hallstadt civilization, assigned by archæologists to the eighth century B.C., the Celts already possessed great skill in metal work, especially in the use of iron, a metal only then becoming known to the craftsmen of many progressive peoples. There is abundant evidence, too, that at this early period they had laid well the foundations of their later excellence in husbandry and in the decorative arts. By about 600 B.C. their formidable armament of iron spears and swords rendered them superior in warfare to the surrounding nations. Their bills and axes enabled them to open roadways through the forest lands, to make extensive clearances, and to till with

comparative ease the fertile stretches thus acquired.[1] About this time they crossed the Alps southward and occupied the fertile valley of the Po, till then under Etruscan domination. The descendants of this early Celtic immigration were known to Polybius as industrious husbandmen. It was probably at the same period that they extended their power and their settlements northward among the Teutonic peoples as far as the Baltic. About 500 B.C. they crossed the Rhone, and, pressing onward into Spain, became the dominant people of the Peninsula. Hence sprang the race of Celtiberi and Aquitani by mixture with the Iberi, who occupied Spain, Portugal, and southern France as far as the Rhone. The remainder of Gaul was seized by successive migrations.

Already, from a remote period, early in the Bronze Age, constant trade communication had existed between the Continent and Great Britain and Ireland. The principal, or at all events the most valuable, element in this commerce was the metals copper and tin, on which the characteristic arts and crafts of the Bronze Age were based.[2] This traffic gave rise to two great lines of communication, one continental, across the English Channel, the other oceanic, and mainly to Ireland, from the river mouths of Gaul and Spain, and through the Straits of Gibraltar Following both these established routes, the Celts poured across the seas into Britain and Ireland. This migratory movement continued until Cæsar's conquest of Gaul (49 B.C.), and probably even later.

[1] *Sligе*, Irish for "a road"; *sligim*, "I hew." Irish tradition frequently mentions the clearing of forests as one of the earliest achievements of the race.

[2] "The slate district of Waterford . . . . has long been known for its mineral treasures, many of the metalliferous veins having been worked by the ancient inhabitants. One almost insulated promontory is perforated like a rabbit burrow. . . . In the abandoned workings antique tools have been found, *stone hammers and chisels*, and wooden shovels" (Sir R. Kane, *Industrial Resources of Ireland*, 2nd edn., 1845, p. 183). The use of stone implements shows that these mines of copper were worked before the Iron Age.

About 400 B.C. a fresh swarm from the populous Celtic hive swept over northern Italy. In 390 B.C. they captured and burned the city of Rome. But by crushing the power of Etruria, they cleared the way for the rise of the Roman empire, and for their own ultimate subjugation. In the third century B.C. the Celts overran the Balkan peninsula and established a powerful republic in Asia Minor. They also settled in Illyria, Thrace, and Macedonia. At the delta of the Danube and on the Vistula, another great waterway of trade, place-names (Noviodunum, "new fort," Carrhodunum, "waggon fort") attest the existence of Celtic strongholds or trading posts. The growing strength of the Germanic peoples—now, too, armed with iron—contributed no doubt to the Celtic dispersion. The Belgæ, Celtic in speech, but perhaps mainly Germanic in race, came over the Rhine into eastern Gaul, the Germans pressing close behind them. A new migration formed from the Belgic race passed over into Britain and as far as the coast of Leinster. It was still fresh in memory when Cæsar's Gallic conquests brought the great Celtic population-movements to an end. Always jealous of their local freedom, the Celts throughout all this period formed loose communities of independent states, and not, as some have imagined, a great empire. On the Continent they showed a strong tendency towards republican forms of government, but the insular Celts adhered to kingly rule; their kings, however, were elected by the freemen, were often deposed by them, and exercised a strictly limited authority.

Before their subjugation by Rome, the continental Celts had not ceased to progress in civilization. The remains of their arts and industries exhibit continuous development. In religion, as in political and social institutions, they exemplify the growth of early European society beyond the area of active Oriental influence; and special historical interest attaches to the inquiry, in what measure and manner

did such a people raise its thoughts beyond nature; what did the Celts think about things divine, about the spiritual world, the soul of man, the life to come?

From three sources chiefly we must expect the answer—from the extant remains of ancient Celtic religion, from the testimony of Greek and Roman writers of antiquity, and from the recorded traditions of the Celts themselves, especially the traditions embedded in the rich mine of early Irish literature.

Celtic Polytheism

In common with the other branches of the Indo-European stock, the Celts believed in a plurality of gods. Of the principal deities of the Gauls, Cæsar has left us a brief account. Unfortunately he chose to describe Gaulish religion from a rigidly fixed Roman standpoint, even substituting Roman names for Celtic names of deities. Perhaps the great master of statecraft wrote thus designedly, in order to bring about a religious union between the conqueror and the conquered. This, at all events, was the outcome, for the Gauls, under Roman rule, called their own chief gods by the names of Roman gods, sometimes preserving the national tradition by tacking on Celtic names or titles of the god to the Roman name.[1] As a consequence, there is much difficulty in fixing the true identity of the Gaulish divinities, and still more difficulty in ascertaining their distinctive features and characters. One thing is certain. Though philologists find the Celt more near akin to the Latin than to the Greek, the ancient Irish traditions contemplate a divine race which, in the fulness, variety, and realism of its attributes, and in the wealth of legend and poetry that celebrates it, resembles the dwellers in the Greek Olympus far more closely than it resembles the meagre and formal, almost lifeless, godfolk of the Roman worship. But just as the continental tradition

[1] Hence such inscriptions as DEO MERCURIO ATUSMERIO; MARTI TOUTATI; MARTI LATOBIO HARMOGIO TOUTATI SINATI MOGENIO.

of the Celts has lost its substance by being forced through the Roman colander, so the insular tradition has been varied and confused by having to live through several centuries of Christianity before it is expressed in writing by Irish authors, themselves Christian, and often on guard lest they appear to claim credibility for Pagan beliefs.[1] Consequently it would require more argument and more space than befits this brief account to set forth a descriptive list of the principal deities of ancient Gaul, Britain, and Ireland, and to attempt the reconstruction of their attributes and divine rôle. It must suffice to say that we have proofs in plenty that the ancient Celts, insular and continental, as one might expect, resembled the Greeks, Latins, Germans, Hindus, and other peoples of the Indo-European family in the worship of a plurality of gods and goddesses.

Of the manner of this worship we know almost nothing. Sacrifice was of course a part of it, and the victims were sometimes human. It was not until after a century of Roman rule that human sacrifices were abolished throughout Gaul by a decree of the Emperor Claudius.[2] Of such cruel rites in Pagan Ireland we have no trustworthy tradition. There is indeed a mediæval poem which says that the Irish used to meet in the centre of the island and to offer their own children in sacrifice to a great monolith named Cromm Cruach. But the period assigned is one of shadowy remoteness. The Gauls sacrificed,

[1] Of this attitude of mind there are innumerable examples in Irish mediæval literature. Eochaid O'Flainn, a noted poet-historian, who died A.D. 1003, wrote a poem on the Irish gods, in which he debates whether they were demons or mortals, finds the verdict that they were of human race, but endowed with supernatural powers, and ends with the protest, "I adore them not!" Many other early Irish poems which relate quite harmless antique traditions conclude with an abrupt profession of Christian faith, apparently apropos of nothing in particular. The poets evidently knew well that the traditions they recorded were derived from Pagan mythology.

[2] But in Rome they still persisted in the form of the putting to death of captives after a triumph.

not their children, but slaves and prisoners of war. In the writings of St. Patrick, and in the lives of this saint and the other founders of Irish and Scottish Christianity, we should expect to hear of the abolition of a rite so repugnant to Christian teaching and civilization, but they are wholly silent on the point. Apparently the island Celts, even while they remained Pagan, had already been raised beyond this savage phase of Paganism. The story of Cromm Cruach, as regards human sacrifice, may well be an echo of the Scriptural accounts of Tophet and the worship of Moloch. *Cf.* Lecture VII. 9, 10, 24.

Temples, images of the gods, and a priesthood seem to have been alike foreign to the national religion of the Celts. In Ireland the early Christians found neither temple, idol, nor priest. The Gauls, however, where they came in contact with the Greeks, and later on with the Romans, adopted these features of southern and oriental worship. A few still extant sculptured representations of Gaulish gods are characteristic products of Greek art, and are as certainly of Greek origin as is the lettering of their inscriptions. It is probable that Celtic worship remained in the patriarchal stage, and that sacrifice was offered by the heads of families, of tribes, and of states.

The Celtic gods represented no ethical ideas of excellence. At all events, the traits of conduct ascribed to the gods in Greek poetry and legend are abundantly reflected in Irish mythological tradition. Doubtless benevolence towards their worshippers was as much of goodness as Celtic heathendom expected of its deities. Their nature, secure from death, was safe from no deadly sin of all the seven. In the hero rather than the god, the Celt, like the Greek, looked for the embodiment of the natural virtues. If the descriptions that have reached us of the Celtic immortals are less august and idealized, and also less distinct, than the representations of the Olympians in Greek art, we may remember that to

the Greeks in their little city states all things came by measure and definition and ceremony; the Celt was plying an age-long warfare against the crude primeval forces of the physical world, and was everywhere face to face, not with measure, but with immensity—with vast forest regions, the rigours of the northern and the Alpine winter, the mystery of the boundless ocean. This experience has shaped and coloured all his thought and all his literature; most of all, his legends of antiquity. His traditions of polytheism, too, are written down not in the presence of the ancient worship, but centuries after it has passed away. In the popular oral traditions of our own time the change is greater still. The grandeur of the Sidhi has dwindled in word as in thought into the diminutive Sidheoga.[1] It is as though the common eye viewed them through the wrong end of a telescope.

The Celts paid religious honour to the forces of nature, not only as personified in certain deities, but also expressly and directly. King Loiguire, in whose reign St. Patrick began his mission to the Irish, invaded Leinster to exact tribute from the provincial king. He was defeated and captured by the Leinstermen, and was not set free until he had invoked the Sun and the Wind as sureties that he would never again demand tribute. He broke his troth, and once more entered Leinster to collect his cattle-tax. He seized some cattle near the frontier, and death came upon him suddenly. "It may be," says the annalist, "that

[1] Sidhi or Aes Sidhe, "the hill-dwellers," is an ancient Irish name for the gods. Sidheoga, a diminutive of Sidhi, is the modern name of the fairies. But they are historically identical. Finnbheara, in the "Colloquy with the Ancients" (S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*), is a chief among the great immortals. His dwelling-place is Knockmaa, near Tuam. In the folklore of to-day he stills dwells in Knockmaa, but only as king of the "little folk" or fairies. The Lugh-chorpan ("Luprachan") or Lugh-chroman of modern fireside tales, "little Lugh-body," "little stooping Lugh," a fairy craftsman, is all that is left in folklore of Lugh, the potent god of arts and crafts, father of the hero Cú Chulainn, and reputed godfather of the great industrial city of Lyons —Lugdunum, the stronghold of Lugh.

his bailsmen to the Leinstermen, Sun and Wind, brought him to death."[1]

The same belief in the conscious and avenging action of the elements is found in many ancient Irish tales. Trees and fountains, or their abiding spirits, were worshipped by both island and mainland Celts. The fountains have become holy wells under the protection of the Saints. The sacred trees are still guarded by fairies. River-deities were a common feature of Celtic belief in Ireland, Britain, and Gaul. Weapons and implements, too, had their indwelling or tutelary spirits.[2] *Cf.* Lectures XI. 3, 4; XIII. 3, etc.

It appears to have been a common doctrine of the ancient "Aryan" stock—to use a convenient term now going out of vogue—that the gods were the ancestors rather than the creators of the human race. The Gauls, we are told by Cæsar, claimed descent from a god whose identity he hides under the Roman name of Dis Pater. This may well be the Irish Dagde (Dago-devos, "the good god"), also called Eochu, "Oll-athair," "the universal father." At any rate, it is certain that the Pagan Irish, too, claimed divine descent, and several gods figure prominently in the ancient genealogical literature. One of these is Nuadu, whose name is the "Middle Irish"

[1] *Annals of Ulster*, A.D. 462.

[2] Instances of tree-worship: Lemovices, Eburovices (peoples of Gaul) mean "warriors under the protection of the elm (Irish, *lem*), of the yew (Irish, *ibor*)." MacCuill, "son of hazel," is the name of a legendary Irish king, also of an Irishman converted by St. Patrick. In the former case the traditional explanation is on record—"hazel was the god that he adored." Some kind of religious filiation is implied here, and also in the personal names MacDara, "son of oak," MacCulinn, "son of holly," Der Draigin, "daughter of blackthorn," Der Froich, "daughter of heath," Eogan, "yew-offspring." River-deities: several are commemorated in Gallo-Roman inscriptions. Deva, "goddess" or "divine," is perhaps the most frequent of Celtic river-names. Boend is the ancient name of the river Boyne, also of the wife of the Dagde or "good god" and the mother of the god Oengus, whose home was on the bank of the river. Implement-worship: MacCecht, "son of plough," was brother to MacCuill, and "the plough was the god he adored." Ordovices, a British people, "warriors of the hammer" (Irish, *ord*). MacTail, "son of adze."

equivalent of Nodons, "deus Nodons," to whom several dedicatory inscriptions of the Roman period have been found in Britain. In the Irish legend, Nuadu is king and leader of the divine race when they arrive in Ireland. From him Maynooth (Magh Nuadhad, "plain of Nodons") derives its name. Lugh, god of light, of the day dawn, of fire, of arts and sciences—the Celtic Phœbus, one might say—comes into the pedigree of many Irish septs. Another ancestor-god is Oirbsiu Mor, better known as Manannan mac Lir, "son of the Sea," for he is the sea-god. The old genealogists tell us that he has a dwelling under the waters of Loch Corrib—indeed the lake bears his name, properly Loch Oirbsen; and a native of the district told me quite recently that in dry weather, when the waters are low, people say that the chimney of the house becomes visible.[1] The genealogists, when they introduce these divine ancestors, avoid all statement of the Pagan belief with regard to them; they say, however, in general terms, that "every one who is fair-haired, honourable, tall; every warrior, every man of music; the people of sweet string-music and of harmony; those who excel in every magic art, ... are the posterity of the Tuatha De Danann in Ireland." Tuatha De Danann is the common literary name of the divine race—"the people of the goddess Dana."[2]

The individual Celtic gods we can no longer visualize as they appeared to the mind of our Pagan forefathers. They are wearing Greek or Roman masks, and are appointed to regulated places in a procession of which some broken glimpses are allowed us. Or they move about full of life, indeed, but at

[1] Manannan, in a story of Christian times, became the father of Mongan, an historical Irish king. In an almost modern tale, he visits the Irish chiefs O'Donnell and O'Kelly and the Earl of Desmond, whom he amuses and confuses by a show of his thaumaturgical powers ("O'Donnell's Kerne," *Silva Gadelica*). The mediæval historians cannot have been greatly successful in their efforts to represent the Sidhi as a race of mortal men.

[2] O'Curry, *MS. Materials of Irish History*, p. 579.

such a distance and in such a mist of faerie, that, if their names were not cried out to us, we should scarcely be able to tell one from the other. It seems to us, the more intently we watch, that the moving figures in this distant drama, as they come and go, are not named by the same names at each appearance. Even among the chief of them, we do not feel absolutely certain that he who was Lugus in one scene may not have been the Manannan of the scene before, and the Ogmios, the Oengus, the Goibniu, or the Diancecht in some other part of the action.

We need not doubt that a very full and explicit mythological tradition was orally preserved by the secular poets of early mediæval Ireland. But what they thus learned explicitly, they wrote down allusively and obscurely. They shrank from a plain tale, lest they should be thought to teach and perpetuate the beliefs of Gentiledom. Hence their frequent protests of Christian faith, usually in concluding verses. Frequently, an antique myth is told in the guise of topographical history. A good example of this kind, with a partial revelation of the poet's conscious attitude, is seen in the "dinnsenchus" or eponymic legend of Carn Máil, an ancient tumulus of stone on the coast between Drogheda and Dundalk. The ostensive object of the story is to account for the name of the place, but the poet, his thoughts lingering on the true esoteric nature of his material, thus begins his song:—

> A thing delightful rises to my mind,
> *It is not the* [mere] *knowledge of a single place:*
> My spirit shedding eastward light
> *On the mysteries of the world.*

After this announcement, we are not surprised to find that the story is one more version of the familiar myth of the sun-god's setting and rising. Lugaid Mál, "the lord Lugaid," is an ancient king of Ireland. He is driven into exile, but only to return. Ere he returns, he conquers all the East, from the Orkneys to the Mediterranean. Then he sails for Ireland. By a splendid simile, he is represented as filling with his ships the river mouths

of Ulster. When he lands, he triumphs, and becomes once more king of Ireland. The ships of Lugaid are the waves that carry the first reflections of dawn to the Irish shore. The name Lugaid encloses that of Lugh, the Irish sun-god. He has six brothers, each named Lugaid. They are the seven days or suns of the week. Their father also bore the name Lugaid, and Lugaid the lord has a son named Lugaid; for though one sunrise succeeds another, it is always the same sun that rises. In another poem, perhaps by the same poet, the river-mouth hard by Carn Máil is called "the port to which the Lugair brought their ship." The Lugair are the Lugu-viri, the men of Lugh or Lugus. Not far away is Lugmed or Lugmad, "Louth," "the *med* or balance of the son of Balor's daughter." Balor was chief of the Fomorians, the gods of darkness, demons they are called in the "Book of Invasions." His daughter Eithne, "the kernel," was hidden and guarded like Danae, for it was foretold to Balor that his own grandson was to slay him. But Cian, "the Ancient One," became her husband, and the son of Balor's daughter was Lugh of the Long Arm. "The Green Hill of Cian" is still shown in that district, which also was the patrimony of Lugh's great son, the hero Cu Chulainn. Needless to say, all this explanation is absent from the story, though known to the poet.

The Celtic Otherworld

If Gaelic tradition has but obscurely preserved the lineaments and characters of the god-folk, it has kept a bright and indeed a loving remembrance of the world in which the gods had their home. Innumerable tales, from the earliest period of Gaelic literature until a few generations ago, have described the home-land of the ancient immortals. No other theme has called forth in any commensurate degree the "natural magic" of the Celtic muse. The Christian vision-makers of Irish and Hiberno-Latin literature were fain to borrow for the Christian Heaven many and many a trait of the brilliant and joyous pictures that poets and storytellers never ceased to draw of that charming otherworld, the Land of the Young, the Land of the Living, the Land of the Living Heart, the Land of Heart's Delight, the Pleasant Plain, the Great Strand, the Land beneath the Wave. Of the two, as indeed we might expect—for what it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, the

tongue of man can never fitly describe or even suggest —the Pagan picture is by far the more successful; and the secular poet might be excused were he to say to Adamnán or to Fursa the words which he puts in the mouth of his Pagan hero—

> One night of the nights of the *Sidhi*
> I would not give for all thy kingdom.

The most striking feature of this Celtic Otherworld, and one that distinguishes it from the homes of immortality described in other ancient literatures, is its localization. Instead of being placed in some remote and wholly separate region of the universe, it is represented as coexistent in locality with the world of human and mortal life; somewhat as one triangle is supposed by Euclid to occupy the place in which another, equal and similar, has already been drawn. Many and sometimes beautiful are the imaginative devices adopted to express this unseen presence of the god-world. When the Irish hero, who may be the son of a god, or may have attracted the love of a goddess, is admitted by favour to the homeland of the immortals, he may win thither by embarking in a small boat on the seashore, and presently vanishing from mortal sight, or by entering through an unknown doorway into the heart of a fairy hill, or by diving into the waters of a lake, or by merely passing through a mist. Or the idea is conveyed by telling that our dry land or the air above us is the sea of the god-world, or that the sea on which our boat is sailing is itself the Pleasant Plain or the sky above it. Doubtless these notions were derived from certain unusual and strange phenomena of nature, and in particular from the mirage phenomena, such as have been recorded as seen at several parts of the Irish coast. I cannot help thinking that the hill-dwellings and banquet-halls of the immortals may have been suggested by discoveries, recorded in ancient as in modern times, of interments within chambered tumuli. In these sepulchral chambers, which in Ireland are pro-

bably pre-Celtic, the dead were sometimes placed in a sitting posture on stone benches, food-vessels and other gear being set before and beside them. The sepulchral tumuli of the Boyne Valley are celebrated in early Irish writings as homes of the immortals.

Out of many songs and stories that tell how the ever-present Otherworld of Pagan tradition has manifested itself to favoured mortals or on favoured occasions, there is one tale brief enough to quote in full, and noteworthy for its association with Christian doings :—

"One day the monks of Cluain (Clonmacnois) held their meeting on the floor of the church. As they were discoursing, they saw a ship under sail in the air above them, moving as if over the sea. Now when the folk of the ship see the assemblage and the place of dwelling below them, they let down the anchor, and the anchor takes grip on the floor of the church, and the clergy lay hold of it. A man comes down out of the ship to recover the anchor, and as if he were in water, so he kept swimming till he reached the anchor, whereupon they caught him. 'In God's name let me go!' said he, 'for ye are drowning me.' He left them then, swimming away in the same air, and taking with him his anchor."[1]

If any mortal obtained access to the Land of the Living, it was during his lifetime, for this was not the home of the dead. While he remained there he suffered neither age nor pain nor decay. Time, as known to mortals, did not exist there; what seemed to be a short time was equal to a long time of mortal life, but a long time in that world might also correspond to a very brief one in this. If the once mortal visitant returned to earth, but did not set foot thereon, he retained his immortality; but if he touched the earth, the lapse of worldly time took effect; he might become at once decrepit and withered with age, might even turn to dust, as though his time of death were already long past.[2]

[1] *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, vol. iii. p. 8.

[2] Hence there is no inconsistency between the stories that make the return fatal, and those that restore the rapt person to earth in full vigour and health. His time of death is that which it would have been

The world of the gods was a place of rural happiness; in it the pleasures of mortal life were idealized, among them the beauties of nature and of art, music, games, feasting, and, to complete the scheme of ancient Celtic felicity, heroic warfare. There was no evildoing, we are told, but this must be interpreted according to Celtic Pagan ideas of good and evil. The gods and their human favourites were not the only inhabitants. The Irish name for the god-folk, or rather for that section of them that belonged to light and comeliness and benevolence, was Tuatha Dé Danann—the Peoples of the goddess Dana, who was perhaps a Celtic counterpart of Demeter. Tuath, tota, touta, or teuta, is a Celtic word which seems primarily to have denoted a petty state, the whole people ruled by a king of the lowest grade. The rulers of the god-world were the gods, so that besides these there were inhabitants of lower rank; in this respect, also, the world of the immortals corresponded to the world of

had he remained in this world. On this point, see Mr Alfred Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, p. 151, etc. "It is surprising," he writes, "that the idea of actual contact between earth and the body of the homefaring mortal being necessary for time to accomplish its work should have persisted as it did" (*i.e.* until the eighteenth century, when Michael Comyn composed an Otherworld poem). The consequence of the earth-touch is vividly illustrated in a piece of folklore told as a language exercise in Nelson's *Irish Grammar* (1808), part ii. p. 71:—"Thady went out on Halloweve night to pray, as he was accustomed, on the bank of the river or at the foot of the forth (fort). Looking up to observe the stars, he saw a dark cloud from the south moving towards him with a whirlwind; and he heard the sound of horses, as a great troop of cavalry, coming straight across the valley. Thady observed that they all came over the ford, and quickly round about the mount. He remembered that he had often heard it said, if you cast the dust that is under your foot against it (them), at that instant, if they have any human being with them, that they are obliged to release him. He lifts a handful of the gravel that was under his foot, and throws it stoutly, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, against the whirlwind; and behold, forthwith down falls a woman, weak, faint, and feeble, on the earth, with a heavy groan. . . . Her name was Mary Rourke—born and bred in the county Galway. She was one year married, and had a child. . . . The child died . . . . and Finvar (Finnbheara) and his host carried herself away to the fairy castle of Knock Magha." In this case the captive had been absent from the world for less than a year, and so remained a young and comely woman after her return. For Finnbheara, see note on p. 7.

men.[1] We read often of battles in the Otherworld, and of many slain, an inconsistency which does not seem to have troubled the minds of ancient writers.

There is no comparable account of the world of the malevolent gods, the Fomorians, gods of darkness and monstrosity. They seem to have dwelt in the northern ocean. Evidently, the ancient notion of the Happy Otherworld won permanency by reason of the beauty with which tradition and literature had clothed it. A supernatural realm of unhappiness could have possessed no such claim on popular or literary favour. Celtic folklore clings persistently to the idea of a race of happy immortals for whom Christian eschatology left a suitable dwelling-place unprovided. The baleful deities of mythology, on the other hand, might worthily be relegated to such an abode as is described in the later part of "Adamnan's Vision."

A variety of minor spirits of evil enter into Celtic tradition, ancient and modern. It is not to the purpose of the present discourse to give any account of these.

Although no traditional description of the dwelling-place of the hostile gods has been preserved, we can feel that a belief in such a place was necessary to complete the scheme of Celtic mythology. As the Tuatha Dé Danann or Sidhi were the lords of light and life, so we may well think that their enemies, the Fomori, were the lords not only of darkness but of death. The two divine races—both alike reckoned to be demons by early Christian writers—although at enmity, were near akin. If one of the two possessed a home, the Land of the Living, the other also must have had a place of abode, which should have been the Land of the Dead. It is to be borne in mind that not dead but living men, and not the many but a favoured few, passed from this world to the Pleasant Plain. Where did the vast multitudes of the dead find a home after death? In putting the question, we

[1] In fact we are expressly told that the immortals consisted of *dé*, "gods," and *andé*, "non-gods."

are assuming for the present that the Pagan Celts believed in a life prolonged beyond death. In view of the very definite teachings of Christianity, we need not be surprised if Christian writers, in dealing with Celtic Pagan tradition, not as critics but as men writing to please and to impart knowledge, eliminated the Pagan account of the abode of the dead. Nevertheless, traces of the ancient doctrine have survived. One of the most noted tales in which the hero goes forth into the Otherworld is "Connla's Faring." Connla, son of the King of Ireland, is invited by a woman from the Unknown to enter her boat of glass and sail away with her. She tells him that in the place whither she goes he will daily take part in the assemblies of his fathers, and that he will be a champion of "the people of Tethra." This land to which Connla is invited is clearly not the Land of the Living, for there the dead fathers of his race held no assemblies. And who is Tethra? From other sources we are informed that Tethra is a king of the Fomorians, the hostile gods. The wife of Tethra is said to be the scaldcrow, a bird of carnage: "the longing of the wife of Tethra is for the fire of combat —warriors' sides slashed open, blood, bodies heaped upon bodies, eyes without life, sundered heads—these are pleasing words to her." Hence we may infer that in the older tradition the Land of the Dead was the realm of the gods of darkness.

In another tale, Tadhg (Taig), son of Cian, sails to a land in which he finds the rulers and nobles of the three races of ancient Ireland. This, therefore, is the Land of the Dead. Among its inhabitants is Connla, with whom the visitor holds converse. There is, on the other hand, an account elsewhere of Connla's death at the hands of a kinsman in this world. The two accounts are not hopelessly at variance, for by death Connla would have passed to the Land of the Dead, and the damsel who came to fetch him thither may have been Death itself.

We have been taking for granted that the Celts believed in the immortality of the soul, or at all events in a life prolonged after death. The point hardly needs to be argued nowadays. The more one learns of the notions and practices of ancient and of primitive peoples, especially with regard to burial, the more one is convinced that this belief was widespread, if not universal. Even more conspicuously than the Celts, the older Western races provided their dead with habitations, *i.e.* places *to live in*. They, as well as the Celts, sent the gear of life—arms, ornaments, food, probably also wives, slaves, and children—to accompany the dead in the after-life.[1] *Cf.* Lectures XI. 12; XIII. 13, etc.

The Druids, their Office and Teachings

Druidism, known as an institution peculiar to the Pagan Celts, has claimed the attention and stimulated the imagination of writers both in ancient and in modern times. Among the ancients, Greek and Roman, who have written about the Druids, are Poseidonios, Cæsar, Cicero, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Mela, Pliny, Tacitus, Dio Chrysostomus, Lucan, Suetonius, Diogenes Laertius, Timagenes, Origen. All these lived in a time when Druidism still flourished or was fresh in living memory among the continental Celts; and it is to be noted that for the most part, while they regard the Celts as barbarians, they speak of the Druids without contempt, and often

[1] These customs have perhaps sometimes been too literally interpreted, without making allowance for that symbolism which is far more familiar and expressive to the primitive than to the more civilized and sophisticated mind. It seems absurd to suppose, for example, that a few morsels of food placed in a tomb were thought to be a sufficient provision of actual sustenance for the deceased; and since tombs must often have been reopened for fresh interments, etc., people could not have remained long under the delusion that the grave-goods which accompanied previous burials were in any way used by the dead. The grave-goods, the sitting or standing posture of the corpses, and the tombs themselves, are best explained as symbolical of belief in the after-life.

in terms of esteem. The modern view of the Druids is usually tinged with romance. Gray's description of the Bard is probably typical of the image that arises to many minds when the word Druid is mentioned.

Among ancient writers, the varying bent of the Greek and Roman mind is seldom better illustrated than in the treatment of this subject. To Greek writers, the main interest of Druidism is found in the doctrines ascribed to the Druids on questions of philosophy. The Romans are more concerned with the influence of the Druids and of their teaching on civil affairs. In addition to these witnesses, we possess in ancient Irish literature the still uncollected and partially studied remains of a full and copious tradition, preserved by a nation in which Druidism continued vigorous for centuries after it had died out on the Continent, and mounting up to a time when the Druid was still a familiar figure in public life. If for the present we venture on a rough-and-ready comparison of the evidence, and on some broad deductions, it must be understood that the material, especially on the traditional side, still awaits proper critical and comprehensive treatment.

Of classical authorities, our best witness is Cæsar, who spent nine years among the Gauls, and whose master mind was able to take intimate observations of their affairs. Although his account of the Druids is provokingly laconic, it contrives to set forth a fuller view of their system than can be gathered from all other classical sources combined.

Druidism was not a common feature of Celtic civilization. There seems to be no evidence that, as a substantial element in Celtic life, it existed anywhere on the Continent but in Transalpine Gaul. Since this country was a relatively late possession of the Celts, we must infer that Druidism too was a late development among them. The existence of the Druids does not appear to have become known to the Greeks and Romans earlier than 200 B.C. Cæsar

learned that the headquarters of the system were in Britain, and that Druidical teaching had taken its origin among the island Celts, and had spread from them to their Gallic neighbours. The continental Druids held their annual assembly in the territory of the Carnutes (*i.e.* in the neighbourhood of Chartres), "which is regarded as the central region of the whole of Gaul." A glance at the map will show that no body of men drawn from all parts of Transalpine Gaul could have chosen this territory as central. On the other hand, if we exclude Belgic Gaul, peopled apparently by somewhat Germanized Celts, the Roman province of Narbonne, conquered between 125 and 118 B.C., and Aquitania, largely Iberian in population, and confine our view to Gallia Celtica, the midland and north-western region, regarded by Cæsar as more purely Celtic, we shall see that in this region the Carnutes occupied a quite central position. It is probable, then, that Druidism was originally introduced into Gallia Celtica only, and that after its establishment there it spread into the surrounding territories. When Cæsar speaks of Britain as the home of Druidism, he or his informants no doubt meant the "Pretanic islands," as the Gauls called them; for when the Romans subjugated Britain they do not appear to have encountered Druidism there except in the extreme west, over against Ireland. Ireland was almost certainly the chief abode of the cult and its place of origin. Between Ireland and north-western Gaul it is now known that close and direct intercourse subsisted from remote prehistoric times.

Since the classical sources are all given under the article "Druidæ" in Holder's admirable compilation, it is needless here to make quotations at length. It must suffice to state the general results which appear to follow with tolerable certainty, or very high probability, from an examination of the evidence.

The Gaulish and Irish Druids have often been

spoken of as a caste or order of priests. If by priests we are to understand persons set apart specially and professionally to perform ritual acts of worship, and especially the act of sacrifice, on behalf of others and the general body, it appears fairly certain that the Druids were not priests. Had they been the priests of Celtic worship, we should find them as conspicuous among the Celts of Italy, Spain, Central Europe, the Balkan peninsula, and Asia Minor, as among the Celts of Gaul and Ireland. No Celtic word has been yet interpreted "priest."[1] Druid is derived by the great philologist Thurneysen from the roots *dru*, a prefix meaning "thorough," or something to that effect, and *vid*, meaning "know." A Druid, then, etymologically, was a man of thorough knowledge, a philosopher, *qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*; and this is indeed the character that unites the various functions which antiquity and tradition ascribe to this singular order.

An order it was, not a caste. As its end was knowledge, its beginning was instruction. The candidate, we know from Cæsar, had to go to a Druidical school, and there to pass sometimes twenty years under instruction before he became a Druid. Large numbers flocked to these schools, some voluntarily, some by parental command. Cæsar, judging as a Roman, thought that the attraction consisted in the franchises conferred on the Druids—freedom from taxation and from military service. He forgot that he himself was the first experience in history that was able to make fighting unattractive to the Gaul. The Gaulish Druids formed some sort of organization, with a president elected for life.

The Druids regarded themselves and were regarded by the people as experts in every branch of Celtic

[1] In Gaul, however, there was a class of persons called *gutuatri*, in some way connected with divine worship. Little is known of them, and they were probably of small importance. The name seems to signify "those who invoke," or perhaps "who interpret voices," √ *gutu*, "voice."

learning. By some Greek writers they are called philosophers, theologians, physiologists. The Druid Diviciacus, Cæsar's friend, was sent to Rome as an ambassador. There he met Cicero and conversed with him, and Cicero tells that he claimed special knowledge, not only of the secrets of the future, but of the secrets of nature. Some early Irish poet, himself an heir to Druidism, makes Amorgen, legendary first Druid of Ireland, pronounce a poem on the subject of himself. "The Druids," says Diogenes Laertius, "delivered their philosophy enigmatically," —orally, Cæsar informs us, and through the medium of verse. Amorgen's pronouncement is accompanied by a later but still ancient commentary, of which the words are here enclosed in brackets.

I am the wind over the sea.[1]
I am the wave of ocean against the land.
I am the sound of the sea.
I am the stag of seven combats.
I am the hawk on the cliff.
I am the sundew (the fairest of plants).
I am the wild boar in valour.
I am the salmon in the pool.
I am the lake on the plain.
. . . . .
I am the word of science.
I am the spear that gives battle.
I am the god that forms fire in the head.
Who enlightens the assembly on the mountains? [Who will clear up each question, if not I?]
Who telleth the ages of the moon? [Who, if not I?]
Who showeth the place where the sun goes to rest? [If not the *fili*?]

The *fili*—a word commonly explained to mean "poet"—as the chief functional representative of the ancient Druid, here identifies himself with the most striking activities (1) of nature, inanimate and animate; (2) of the supernatural world; and (3) of the human mind and hand. He is at one with all these things, because he alone understands and explains all. His alone is thorough knowledge. Hence we can understand how the Druids, though not priests, were

[1] In this translation, which is uncertain in part, I have mainly followed D'Arbois de Jubainville. I cannot, however, accept his general view that a Celtic pantheism underlies the poem.

deferred to as experts in all matters of religion. "They concern themselves," says Cæsar, "with the affairs of the gods, look after sacrifices public *and private*, interpret religious matters." Strabo says that the Celts "did not offer sacrifice without Druids." Mela, having spoken of the abolition of human sacrifice among the Celts, goes on at once to say: "They still have their eloquent speech, and the Druids as their teachers of wisdom." It would have been easy for each of these writers to have said that the Druids were priests had they known it to be true. We are here only concerned with the religion of the Celts, but there is no scarcity of evidence in Greek, Latin, and early Irish writings to prove that the prominence of the Druids in the religious worship of the most western Celts was merely a phase of their prominence in every branch of Celtic lore and culture. Just as they were experts in theology and ritual, so they were experts in law, education, poetry, history, medicine, moral and physical science.[1] In matters of religious belief and in ethics, they no doubt refined, clarified, and expounded the existing popular tenets. It does not appear that they established any new or peculiar doctrine. Diogenes Laertius sums up briefly their religious and ethical teaching. "Their philosophy," as he calls it, "enigmatically delivered, was, to honour the gods, to do no evil, and to practise manliness." There was nothing strange or peculiar in all this, but perhaps it showed a confident definiteness that, by contrast, fixed the attention of the unsettled sceptical Greek mind, just then awaiting a clearer message. This same attitude of doubt, inwardly longing to escape from doubt, caused a number of writers to ascribe specially to the Druids two noted beliefs—in immortality and in the transmigration of souls.

It is now known that the ancient Irish regarded

[1] Cæsar tells us that they expounded the nature not only of the gods but also of the material universe.

the passage of the soul from one human body to another, or to the body of a lower animal, sometimes from animal to animal, and back again to a human body, as a possibility. Such a popular belief was almost certain to interest the Druids, and that they had something to teach about it is well attested. Hence arose the fable that Gauls (Galati) had become pupils of Pythagoras, as Alexander Polyhistor relates in the beginning of the first century B.C. A succession of Greek and Latin writers allude to this Celtic belief, and to its similarity to the doctrine of Pythagoras. Irish legends of Pagan origin show some prominent instances of transmigration—so prominent, and so different from what is indicated by word or silence in other cases, as to warrant us in concluding that the thing was thought to be rather exceptional than usual or universal. Cæsar, whose attention had doubtless been directed to the matter by the Greeks, has perhaps with deliberate vagueness spoken of the two doctrines as though they were one: "This doctrine especially they [the Druids] seek to establish, that souls do not perish, but pass after death into other persons; and this they consider the strongest incitement to valour, fear of death being disregarded." The passage of the soul after death "into another person" must not necessarily be taken to imply a new birth in this world. It may rather point to the belief in a new life very similar to this life, but not in this world.

The life after death, as usually regarded by the ancients, was gloomy, cheerless, and pervaded with unsatisfied longing; and therefore the departed spirit was fain to return and to "haunt" the body, the home, or the familiar places of its former existence. Fear of ghosts is not a leading trait of the ancient Irish legends; and if the Druids used immortality as an argument against fear of death, they must have taught that the life to come was desirable. This is almost implied in the tone of a passage quoted by

Ammianus from Timagenes, who wrote in the reign of Augustus: "Raised up by their inquiries into occult and lofty things, and looking down on human affairs, they pronounced that souls were immortal."

In modern Irish tradition, the Druid, *draoi*, is well remembered, but only as a wizard; *draoidheacht*, druidry, means enchantment or magic. This signification might be thought to have grown out of the ancient repute of the Druids for all manner of learning, but we have strong indications that the development was in the contrary direction. The ancient Druids were in fact magicians, and some of their magic practices are described in detail by Pliny. The connection of the Druids with magic and medicine, taken with the spread of Druidism among the Celts from a region not formerly Celtic, is strongly suggestive. Peoples possessing a highly developed polytheism and a progressive civilization, though they may cling to a belief in wizardry, do not hold the practice of magic in high esteem. Among more barbarous peoples, especially those who follow a crude animistic religion, the sorcerer, witch-doctor, or medicine-man is a person of the highest importance. Hence it has been suggested that the Celts, perhaps in Ireland, becoming mingled with the primitive aboriginal stock, adopted from these their magical experts, and having adopted them, developed and transformed them into the Druids of history.[1]

This view is strongly supported by an early Irish

[1] "The great difficulty in understanding the evolution of Celtic art lies in the fact that although the Celts never seem to have invented any new ideas, they professed an extraordinary aptitude for picking up ideas from the different peoples with whom war or commerce brought them into contact. And once the Celt had borrowed an idea from his neighbour, he was able to give it such a strong Celtic tinge that it soon became something so different from what it was originally as to be almost unrecognisable." J. Romilly Allen, *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times* (1904), p. 13. The theory of the non-Celtic origin of Druidism has been ably argued by Dr. Julius Pokorny, *Celtic Review*, July 1908.

tradition found in the "Irish Nennius." According to this tradition, the Irish Celts learned Druidism along with many practices of the magical order from the Picts. The racial origin and affinities of the Picts are still a problem. They were distinguished from the Celts by the primitive custom of matriarchy. Their chief habitat was the northern parts of Britain and Ireland, which seems to show that they were an older population than the Celts.[1] Several classical writers ascribe strange and barbarous marital customs to the ancient Britons and Irish. These customs, however, are not recognized in the oldest Irish sagas, which are often frankly Pagan in spirit, and describe a state of society in some respects very repugnant to Christian ideas. The continental Celts, under stricter observation, are not recorded to have followed similar customs. It may well have been that accounts reported of the Picts or other aborigines in Britain and Ireland were taken as true of the islanders in general.

That Druidism, in later Irish tradition, reverted to the character of mere wizardry, is easily explained. The more reputable functions of the Druid—those connected with law, poetry, history, the study of nature, education—passed over to the Christian learning which is the glory of ancient Ireland. He retained his Pagan religious traditions and his magic.

The Cult of the Dead

To this day in some Celtic lands ancient pagan customs associated with death and burial are represented in the observances of the country folk. A solemn lamentation is sung over the dead body. The words, in which praise and sorrow are combined, are often extemporised. A funeral feast, corresponding

[1] That is, if they themselves were not Celts ; and I think we have no satisfactory evidence that they were, and a good deal of evidence that they were not.

to the *perideipnon* of the Greeks or the *silicernium* of the Romans, is still customary throughout Ireland. The funeral games known in Greece and Rome were equally a Celtic institution, which lasted after the disappearance of Paganism. Irish tales contain a fixed formula telling how the obsequies of a great man were celebrated: "his pillar-stone was raised above his tomb, his name was engraved in ogham, his funeral games were held."

While the southern branches of the Indo-European race tended more and more towards city life, the Celts remained a people of the fields. At Athens and at Rome the dead were buried outside of the city. The Celts, on the contrary, living in the open lands, had their cities of the dead, and these places, attracting periodical concourses of the people, became the great centres of national life. Annually or triennially, at fixed times, a grand assembly was held at the chief cemetery of the people. The time chosen appears to have been one of the principal Pagan festivals, such as Lugnasad, the festival of Lugus, in the beginning of August, or Samain, corresponding to the Christian feasts of All Saints and All Souls. The Book of Leinster preserves an account, written in the eleventh century, of "Oenach Carman," the great periodical assembly of the kingdom of Leinster. The author of this account, which is in verse, tells that the Oenach or Fair was instituted in the time of the Tuatha Dé Danann, the divine race, and continued to be held down to his own time. Its place of celebration was "a renowned cemetery," "a burial place of kings and queens," and he speaks of its "many tumuli," and its "straight-lined graves."

> "One and twenty ring-mounds of lasting fame
> Where a multitude lies in tbe earth's embrace;
> Seven tumuli, not of heated resort,
> For the frequent lamenting of the dead;
> Seven fields, inviolable, with no house,
> For the funeral games of Carman."

The first Fair was held to do honour to a dead queen. When Christianity came, the Fair continued under the blessing of the Saints of Ireland. The festival lasted for seven days, and the first day was "the Fair of the Saints." Doubtless in Pagan times this day had been set apart for the worship of the gods. On the succeeding days, the honours of the dead were paid in due order. The second day was devoted to the kings of Leinster, the third to the women, the fourth to the tributary states, the fifth to princes of the royal blood, the sixth to the freemen of Leinster, the seventh to the men of Ossory. The Fair began on the kalends of August, the festival of Lugus, in every third year. Lawsuits were decided, as at the conventions held under the Druids in the centre of Gaul. Taxes and tributes were regulated. The royal bounty was bestowed on every art. There were musical performances. The men of lore recited the traditional tales and the histories of the people, their territorial divisions and their genealogies. Horse races, too, and rude comic shows were held, and—almost the only feature of the ancient Celtic funeral assemblies that now survives—a market of food and cattle, and of articles of luxury imported by "Greeks," *i.e.* Eastern traders.

> "Three markets in the well-ordered land,
> A market of food, a market of live stock,
> The great market of the Greek foreigners
> In which gold and precious fabrics are sold."

The people of Leinster hold this Fair, we are told, "that the land with its goodly fruits may be granted them from the Lord." Failure to hold it brought blemishes of body and mind on the rulers:

> "Not to hold it brings
> Baldness, corpulence, early grayness,
> Kings without wit, without wisdom,
> Without generosity, without truth."

The Ethics of Celtic Paganism

Celtic society, like that of other Indo-European peoples, had a monogamous basis; but the Irish sagas, which contain the fullest tradition of Celtic Paganism, bear evidence of no very strict regard for the marital tie or for continence as a virtue. The high standard of sexual conduct which is characteristic of the modern Catholic Celt reaches no great antiquity. On the other hand, even the crudest remains of ancient Celtic literature are notably free from the spirit of deliberate grossness or wantonness. Courage, truth, pity, generosity, courtesy, justice are the virtues held up to admiration. Humility, meekness, self-mortification had naturally no place in the list. An intense pride of person, of kindred, and of race is among the leading characteristics of the ancient Celts, but did not amount among them to a disdain for labour. Like the Hebrews, they valued highly the industry of the husbandman, the housewife, the craftsman. The ancient laws of Ireland base their authority on the customs of the Feni, that is, of the free agricultural population. It may be noted in passing that these laws claim to be of Pagan origin, and that the spirit of equity that pervaded them led their early Christian redactors to declare that even in heathen times the legists of Ireland were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Homicide, and injuries to person, property, honour, or character, were regarded among the Celts and other northern races as offences less against what we should call a moral code than against the legal rights of the individual or of his kindred, and could be atoned for by a legal compensation.

Ideas of Luck and Fate in Celtic Tradition[1]

The idea of luck seems to offer a tenacious resistance alike to religion and to science. Countless millions who acknowledge the omnipotent Ruler of the universe doubtless hold more or less definite beliefs in the governance of certain classes of occurrence or of certain particular events or courses of events by a wholly impersonal, vague, and undescribable power or influence which we may call Luck. In probably every language there is a large series of words and phrases in constant and familiar use that bear witness to the striking vitality of this order of beliefs. The rejection of the supernatural seems not to diminish, and often rather to aggravate, the potency of the luck notion.

An idea so widely distributed over peoples and times might not call for special notice in connection with Celtic religion, but for the fact that in ancient Celtic tradition it obtained a peculiarly concrete expression, and, if we accept the evidence of tradition, was able to exercise a correspondingly definite influence on conduct.

One of the most prominent features of early Irish legend is the *geis* (plural *gesa*, *geasa*). The word *geis* has often been translated "taboo," but if we may take as approximately accurate the account of the "taboo" given by Deniker (*Races of Man*, 1900, p. 252) there is a vast difference between the two things, and we may avoid erroneous conclusions by keeping the terms distinct. Etymologists connect *geis* with the verb *guidim*, "I pray," so that in the mere etymological sense *gesa* might appear to be the consequences of praying or wishing. But ideas are seldom defined by their names; and if the idea be older than the name we know for it, as may well be in this

[1] The subject is discussed by Prof. E. J. Gwynn in the *Journal of the Ivernian Society* (Cork) for April 1910, but chiefly in contrast to the Greek conception of Fate.

instance, etymology may hopelessly mislead us in the interpretation.

A *geis* was a law of conduct which required an individual or a class of persons to do or to refrain from doing some action or class of actions. The breaking of the law entailed tragic consequences. On the other hand, when the *geis* was observed, sometimes greater happiness might be expected, but in general the outcome was merely an escape from evils.

A negative or prohibitive *geis* is sometimes called *ergaire*, "prohibition"; a positive *geis* is called *ada* or *buaid*, terms denoting an act which brings success or betterment to the doer. As a rule, the origin of the *geis* is not explained, and its existence is mentioned as a matter of course, a thing for which no explanation is to be looked for. Some *gesa* are hereditary in families and genealogical groups, some belong to a particular office, *e.g.* that of king of a particular region. In the heroic literature, nearly every great hero is subject to a number of personal *gesa*, to which apparently he is born. But frequently we read of *gesa* imposed by one person on another. The imposer may be quite a stranger to the recipient; it is not indicated how or whence he derives the power of imposing, and the command contained in the *geis* in these, as indeed in most cases, is often one which has no apparent claim to be obeyed. Mystery in the binding nature of the *geis* itself, in its origin, and in its consequences, is the character which seemed to best satisfy the popular conception. In some instances, however, an ethical or prudential value can be assigned to the observance.[1] On the whole, *gesa* may be regarded as special concretions of the luck notion. The superstition which declares the spilling of salt or

[1] An example of a *geis* which (1) arises from an alleged historical event, and (2) was not likely to be violated except passively and unwillingly, is the *geis* which prohibited a man of the Dairine state or people from getting his leg broken within a house!

the breaking of a mirror to be unlucky might well be called a universal *geis*, for if these acts were held to be unlucky for a certain individual alone, they would undoubtedly be numbered in Irish legend among that individual's *gesa*.

Two texts may be referred to as classic examples of the Irish belief in *gesa*. One of these is the tale *Bruiden Da Derga*, of which there is an English translation by the late Whitley Stokes, and an English poetical version by Sir Samuel Ferguson. The subject of the tale is the tragic fate of Conaire Môr, a legendary hero and king of Ireland, and ancestor of a noted branch of the Irish people, the Erainn or "Erneans." Conaire was a paragon of kingly virtue, a just and vigorous ruler, a man of great dignity and nobility of character and person. Like other heroes, he was subject to a group of *gesa*, and it is precisely in his firm purpose to do right and justice that he is led step by step to violate his *gesa* one by one, and thus to drive himself to utter ruin. The power that the *gesa* represent is in this instance ruthlessly anti-moral.

The other text is a poem by Cúán Ua Lothcháin, chief poet of Ireland, who died in 1024. It tells of the *gesa*, negative and positive, of the king of Ireland and his four chief subordinate kings. The nature of these *gesa* and of *gesa* in general is sufficiently indicated in the following extract :—

"The five prohibitions of the king of Leinster are: a Wednesday's tour in North Leinster lefthandwise (*i.e.* contrary to the sun's apparent course), to sleep between the Dodder and Dublin leaning his head on one shoulder, a nine days' encampment on the Plain of Cualu, a Monday's march on the road of Dublin, to ride a dirty black-heeled steed over the plain of Mullachmast. His five boons : the fruit of Allen, the deerhunt of Glenn Serraig, to drink by the light of wax candles in Dinn Rig above the Barrow, the ale-feast of Cualu, the games of Carman." A prose comment adds : "It is certain for the kings of Ireland that if they avoid their (prohibitive) *gesa* and secure their boons, they shall meet no mischance or misfortune, no epidemic or mortality shall befall in their reigns, and they shall not experience the decay of age during ninety years."

It remains to be added that the origin of *gesa*, as of Druidism and augury, is ascribed by an ancient Irish writer to the Picts. In truth, we seem to recognize here the gloomy non-moral and non-theistic creed of some rude aboriginal race, in striking contrast to the bright and cheerful beliefs of Celtic polytheism.

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BUDDHISM

From the French of

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IN these few pages no complete account of Buddhist doctrines can be offered, still less a History of Buddhism. Our aim must therefore be to furnish the reader with a few general observations which will familiarize him with the Buddhist mind, and may lead him to have recourse to the sources themselves and to completer treatises. Though we shall not wholly neglect later Buddhism, we shall chiefly dwell upon its earliest forms: the Bibliography (p. 30) will to some extent remedy this defect.[1]

I. PRE-BUDDHIST BRAHMINISM

Vedism, or ancient Brahminism—the shape, that is, which Indo-European religious tradition assumed in India about the second millennium B.C.—can be reduced to a very few essential elements.

1. *The Dead.*—The destiny of the dead depends strictly upon the services rendered to them by their descendants in the male line, born in legitimate wedlock, and properly initiated into religious rites. Hence flows a strict obligation to marry, not only to ensure a man's personal happiness after death, but also that of his ancestors. Hence too a strict obli-

[1] The present number of Buddhists cannot properly be ascertained. The only genuine Buddhists of any education are monks. All statistics which assign very large numbers to this "religion" are therefore practically valueless, just as it would be untruthful to reckon all the pagans of the Roman Empire as Stoics or Platonists.

gation to fulfil all funeral ceremonies—cremation, as a rule—and those of commemoration, *e.g.* anniversary banquets for the dead—and finally, the daily offerings. The proper accomplishment of these rites itself depends upon ceremonies of a sacramental character which affect the whole of a man's life, from conception to initiation (which heralds a period of submission and of study in the house of a professor), and to marriage.

Alongside of the earlier (?) conception of the dead man living on in his tomb, and requiring nourishment, or residing in some vague "lower" world, or "in the south," exists the belief that at least the dead who have lived well pass to a place of light, where they live in company with the first dead man, Yama, and the great god Varuna. "Fathers" (*pitaras*) are souls in bliss, who are useful to their descendants. The "defunct" (*preta*) are the dead who have not yet attained the abode of bliss, or ghosts. The problem of the retribution of sin in the future life has not yet been thoroughly discussed.

2. The *gods*, who are to be adored, praised, nourished with ordinary foods and especially with *soma* (an unknown juice), are, roughly, very powerful, indeed all-powerful beings, benevolent, and orderers of the world. Some are extremely moral, and indeed almost transcendent. It seems certain that most of them are personifications of the greater natural phenomena. The fire on a man's hearth is thus a God-Friend, intimately bound up with the family, yet identically the same fire as shines in the sky.

It is scarcely worth while to mention that the exalted ideas of order and morality which exist in this religion do not exclude inferior elements—magic, animism, etc.[1] These elements, however, are but little represented, and, in fact, not at all in the Veda *par excellence*, the Rigveda or collection of hymns for the great sacrifice (the Indo-Iranian *soma* ritual).[2]

[1] *Cf.* Lect. I. p. 4. [2] *Cf.* Lect. X. p. 26.

3. These elements are, no doubt, found in almost all "primitive" religions. Yet specifically Vedic and Indian features are very numerous: Indra, master of the thunder, bears only the remotest resemblance to Zeus; the Vedic sacrifice is quite different from the Homeric or Semitic sacrifice: the various shades of difference can be studied in works on early Vedism. But in essentials, and in such "dogma" as there is in it, we must certainly regard the oldest Brahminism as an Indo-European rather than a Hindu religion.

The Hindu or genuinely Brahmin characteristics make themselves felt, however, very early.

As the result of events of which we have only imperfect information, the *soma*-sacrifice became a liturgical process of extreme complexity: professional knowledge became necessary for its due performance. Alone the Brahmins could officiate, for they were the heirs of a technical lore, qualified by fact of birth to be intermediaries between gods and men. Not all Brahmins, however, consecrated themselves to the service of the altar. Schools of sacred learning were formed, where the traditions were preserved and elaborated; a complicated and protracted apprenticeship or noviciate was devised. The Brahmins, in speculating on the sacrifice—which ever tended to change from being an oblation and a contract (*do ut des*: "I give that you may give") into a practically magic rite—could not but go on to speculate on the dead, on the gods, and the order of the universe. Either compelled by sheer logic, or under the influence of circumstances, they ended by realizing many things, and in chief (*a*) that the traditional gods were not really sovereign beings, independent and distinct each from the other, as had hitherto been believed; and so each one after the other, from a very early date, came to be adorned with all the attributes and all the power of his fellows. This is Henotheism, the cult of a god, as God, without excluding the recognition of other gods equally believed in. Monotheism

of a certain sort, at any rate, may prove the ultimate goal of this process of fusion, and indeed Supreme Gods have so been fashioned. But usually the result was quite other: the gods are thought to hold their divinity from a superior God, Brahmâ or Vishnu or Hiranyagarbha, the "Germ of Gold" blossoming on the primordial waters; but what can this God be save the infinite and impersonal Force which develops, gives life to, and ultimately reabsorbs the universe? Did this world issue from Being, from a personal First Principle? or from not-Being, universal, undifferentiated Force? Were the gods born before the world, or did they come after it? "He that is on high knoweth; and even He, knoweth He it indeed?"

The Brahmins, after their fashion (which is not that of Spinoza or of Hegel), delved deep into this problem of Essential Being. But a childish psychology, a mythological *mise en scène*, and ritualistic speculations mingled endless discordant images with their philosophy of existence. Still, gradually, and at any rate in certain groups of thinkers and at certain periods, the gods, in so far as they are distinct and transcendent beings, disappear behind the splendid but bewildering vision of the Brahmă (neuter).[1]

(*b*) Do the dead enjoy for all eternity the home of bliss whither sacrifices and their good acts have exalted them? The opinion soon sprang up that they will die again if they do not succeed in outpassing the world of contingencies and so reach eternal Brahmă. To return thus into the infinite Being is to attain indeed to absolute happiness, but it entails the utter stripping off of "selfhood." The Brahmins in their eschatology tend "to sacrifice personality, which, for us, is the all-in-all of after-death subsistence" (Barth). From the dawn of Indian speculation this tendency is very marked. "He by whom man knoweth, how should He know Himself? There only where duality

[1] Brahmā, the supreme God, is masculine.

exists, can Consciousness exist. . . . After death, there is no more self-consciousness."

(*c*) The idea that the dead are to die again in order to live once more on earth is possibly an evolution from purely Vedic concepts (A. M. Boyer, Oltramare), but it is in perfect harmony with the savage belief in reincarnations. The most ancient Brahmins believed, as did the Indo-Europeans, that the father is born anew in his son, and never did they wholly abandon the old dogma of the Family, even when they admitted transmigration. The Hindus apparently imagined, and so the Buddhists assure us, that generation implies not alone the normal process, which is not indeed invariably necessary, but the presence of some human or even of an animal being, disincarnate, and anxious for reincarnation. Such is actually the belief of certain contemporary Australian tribes.

Now the Brahmins had thought that souls mounted towards the sun, to descend thence in the form of rain, then food, then seed, when they did not merit to pass beyond the sun and "second-death." They further saw that any reincarnation was possible only according to a law: the new life could not but be either recompense or punishment: and upon the older and almost savage superstition they superimposed a moral and cosmological philosophy; beings, from all eternity, pass from existence to existence, being now gods, now men, now animals, and now damned.

Transmigration was considered as essentially painful: first, because the sum of suffering in the seen and unseen worlds, in earth and hell, infinitely outweighs the sum of joys; next, because the return into Brahmă, and the emancipation from new death, immortality, appeared the ideally perfect Good.

(*d*) It accordingly seemed evident, to certain groups, that marriage and funeral ceremonies were relatively useless, since no essential connection need exist between father and son. Sacrifice and good works can but win a fleeting pleasurableness in reincar-

nations to which a man may be destined; but the essential thing is to become united to Brahmă, towards which nothing that is contingent can lead.

Often, therefore, Brahmins, after fulfilling the obligations of human life, "when their hair grows white and they have seen their son's son," will leave their homes to dwell as wandering mendicants or anchorets, offering a wholly interior sacrifice, seeing Brahmă in all things, and all things in Brahmă, striving to rid themselves of that ignorance which hides from the eyes of the soul the true and only Reality.[1] Some of them meditate on Brahma as "qualified," that is to say, as God; others immerse themselves in the contemplation of the pure Existence, considering the universe as a sort of wizard play of the Supreme Being; all are agreed that the world is but a phase, in itself painful, of the uncreated light, and that the breath which animates us is but an emanation, a pseudo-personality of Brahmă. But it is not the Brahmins alone who take these steep ways to salvation: many a member of the feudal nobility (Kshatriyas), whence the heads of Orders like the founder of the Jaïnas (Jina) and of the Bauddhas (Buddha) were to rise, were as fervent. And again, in the taste for asceticism which, in all these forms of religion, underlies speculation, the line of demarcation between what is Hindu and what genuinely Brahmin is hard to trace: many of these penitents were in search less of immortality than of magic powers. We cannot forget, without courting false conclusions, that Brahmin speculation and asceticism developed in a pagan environment.[2]

[1] *Cf.* Lect. XII. 11.

[2] On *Vedism* and *Brahminism* a *résumé* and bibliography will be found in two short volumes by the present writer, published by Bloud, Paris, 1908–1909. See also Barth, *Religions of India* (Trübner, Oriental Series); Hopkins, *Religions*; Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (tr. by A. S. Geden; Edinburgh, 1906). The general conception of this book appears to me, however, at fault. See Thibaut, *Vedântasûtra*, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxiv., Introduction.

II. Buddhism

At a period placed, with hesitation, by most scholars in the middle of the sixth century B.C., a young man belonging to the sub-Himalayan clan of the Śākyas, and the family of Gotama, set out, like so many others, in quest of immortality. After passing from master to master, and practising the most appalling austerities, he imagined, again like many another, that he had found the key to the problem, and proclaimed himself *Buddha*, that is to say, *Enlightened*. He formed about himself a group of ascetics. "Founder thus of a religious order, he knew also how to charm the masses" (Senart): alongside of his inner circle of disciples were to be found numerous admirers, "devotees," or lay adherents. The disciples were recruited not merely from among the crowd of religious to whom he could succeed in demonstrating his personal and doctrinal pre-eminence. We cannot possibly explain his immense success save by assigning it to those mysterious reasons which are responsible for the magnetism of great men. From such far distances the echo of his words returns, that we cannot but rank him among the greatest heroes of history. Unfortunately, a loyal criticism will not suffer us to form more than conjectures upon his personal life and actual doctrine. We can, however, quite easily group into coherent form most of the features of ancient Buddhist thought and organization.

1. Buddhists believe in survival, transmigration, and retribution of man's actions in this life or in a future life which shall be celestial, human, or infernal. They did not, as we see, invent this dogma, but we must notice that, first, when the Buddha says "act," or "action," he essentially means the act which is *Thought*; while according to the Jaïnas, followers of the Jina and rivals

of the Buddha, an action, if we disregard the *intention* of the agent, is in itself a sort of subtle and indestructible *matter*. Second, that the doctrine of Action as deciding the character of the next life is taught in old Brahmin scriptures, but is there considered as a "secret," and the peculiar esteem in which the Buddha holds the Jaṭilas, ascetics who adore fire, and who are dispensed from making any noviciate, "because they believe in the doctrine of Action," seems to imply that the doctrine was anyhow not widely spread. Third, the "action" which the Buddha has in view is pre-eminently the *moral* act. He adopts, we readily confess, a formula of the Jaṭilas anathematizing those who deny the benefits accruing from sacrifice; but an immense preponderance of evidence proves that he holds the mere ritual action as far inferior. The Brahmins, on the other hand, continued believing sacrifices, whether to the Gods or to the Fathers, to be absolutely indispensable. The Brahmin ethic, formed round the domestic hearth, is, as we might well have expected, more wide and more human than the Buddhists'; to the latter, however, must indisputably be assigned the merit, if merit it be, of having almost entirely rationalized all ethics, and, by disentangling morality from religious or superstitious notions, and by connecting it with a rigorous conception of retribution, of having given to some of its precepts—those that forbade Theft, Lying, Murder, Adultery, Alcohol—a singularly powerful sanction. Fourth, the gods, according to the Brahmins of certain schools at any rate and at certain periods, had acquired their godhood by sacrifices, penances, and other virtuous acts: they are not eternal: not only, indeed, at the end of the cosmic period, all will return into aboriginal chaos, but a god can come into existence in the midst of the onflow of time. However, this theogony, or god-making on a basis of merit, remains among the Brahmins a mere theory, admitting some sort of reconciliation with the dogma

of the supreme God "personified" in Brahmā, Śiva, and Vishnu. In Buddhism, however, the theogony is everywhere present and recognized, whence comes a progressive degradation in the view taken of the gods, who are inferior not merely to a Buddha, but even to a truly virtuous and wise Buddhist. Finally, neither Brahmins nor Buddhists are perfectly consistent in the dogmatic system built up around the notion of Act. Room has to be found for the idea of fate, for the influence of ancestors, for the infectious character of sin, for the graces of a god or a Buddha.

2. The Brahmins admitted as valuable, and even at times held as necessary, to achieve immortality (in Brahmă), the life of religious, mendicant, or anchoret; but this road to salvation lay open only to members of the higher castes, and of these, only to those who had fulfilled the obligations of ordinary life; sacrifice, that is, and marriage. These two laws, however, admitted of exceptions: every religious, by becoming "a man of salvation," was freed from limits of caste; whatever his origin, a saint was always respectable! And, again, the young Brahmin was permitted to spend all his life as a "student" in his master's house, observing strict celibacy. Buddhism condemned the whole theory of marriage, though its lay followers could at least accumulate, as a rule, by non-sin and giving alms to monks, such merits as should obtain for them a happy reincarnation in which they would have opportunities of becoming monks. Buddhism also infused a freer spirit into the question of caste. But in practice, of these two points, marriage and caste, only the first proved important.

3. Before the Buddha, many heads of Orders had organized religious life on the Brahminist model, in imitation of the rules of the life of a Brahmin student, intermingling with this, however, many Hindu practices. Most of these Orders gave an important, indeed predominant, place to penance. The Buddha is held to have created an intermediate way of

life between the sensuality of ordinary life in the world, and the exaggerated asceticism of the naked ascetics and their like. But, as a matter of fact, Buddhism included two sorts of religious: "sedentary" or "conventual" monks, who took too much of nothing, but suffered themselves to lack nothing; and the "foresters," who were penitents in the strict sense, and slept at the foot of a tree, without shelter or fire. The former class is by far the more important, and we can but admire the arrangements —not all indeed original—which the Buddhist confraternities made to ensure morality and an exalted spiritual life in these mendicant brothers. Noviciate; fortnightly reunion for the reading of the Book of the rules and for confession; precepts bearing on the work of asking alms, on meals, on life within the convent during the rainy season, on clothes, on the way of travelling during the fine season,—all this and more was in practice. Nor must it be forgotten that the "foresters" may in no way mutilate their bodies, nor adopt any of the morbid exaggerations of Hindu asceticism; even nudity, as practised by the Jaïnas, is forbidden them, as also the vow of silence; and, *a fortiori*, thaumaturgy, at least in theory. The life of the Buddhist religious does not entail any law of obedience, but expects obedience to the law, *i.e.* chastity, concord, frugality: abstinence from flesh meat is not enjoined upon him; nor is there any law of work; indeed, work is prohibited: nor is there any law of poverty in regard of the Order as a whole. As for the individual monk, his material living is, in practice, ensured to him by the alms which, at least from time to time, he must go and collect, by the offerings to and reserve funds of the convent, and by charitable hosts who may ask him in to dine. His intellectual life includes much meditation, hypnotic and even ecstatic exercises, which are indeed common property to all the sects and some of them of immemorial antiquity.

4. What is the object of this monastic life? In one word, Immortality. The good folk who observe the Pentalogue (see p. 8), and give food to the monks, obtain thus the certainty of not going to expiate their sins in hell, and even of reincarnation in fortunate—indeed, it may be divine—conditions. These are advantages by no means to be ignored. But by this worldly road alone they can never pass beyond the cycle of transmigrations. The Brahmins believed exactly the same in regard of the fruit of good works and sacrifices. Clearly it was but perishable: according to them, only they who adored the Brahmă "in truth" were to reach eternal salvation. Similarly, those alone who have learnt from the Buddha the truth about salvation, and who, under his direction, practise the "renunciation," "continence," the so-called *Brahmacarya*, that is to say, only the monks, enter upon the road which leads to deliverance.

But as to the metaphysical account of "Brahmā," a pantheist God, or an All-God, or Supreme God, the Buddhists do not feel satisfied. Though nothing could be harder than to reduce their doctrines to a coherent system, yet on many points we can regard ourselves to have attained moral certainty.

Less even than the Brahmins do Buddhists hold to Personality. Immortality, or emancipation from Transmigration, is called Refreshment, *Nirvāṇa*. It is *not* annihilation. But it is no known or imaginable form of existence. We must force ourselves to accept our data such as they are: Nirvāṇa is *not* annihilation, but even less is it a beatific *existence*. Evidently we are here face to face with a notion which, for us, will ever remain fundamentally alien and incomprehensible. In Brahmin philosophy we can, after all, understand that the return to, nay, *into* the Supreme Being, is absolute bliss, even though personality lose itself therein like a drop of water losing itself in the ocean. But the Buddhists deny this Supreme Being; their Nirvāṇa is neither a place nor a state; they

heap argument on argument to prove that Nirvāṇa is a pure emptiness, the end of the activity of thought. From the standpoint of our logic, and according to any rigorous scheme of deduction such as ours, this would mean sheer nothingness. And yet, so to translate the word *Nirvāṇa* would be, according to the opinion of many competent Indianist scholars, a blunder which would vitiate our whole interpretation of Buddhism. Let us loyally recognize that the Hindu mind possesses a "category"—a form of thought—which in ours is lacking.

The *Nirvāṇa*, then, or Immortality, or the Further Shore, or Home Unshaken, or Island, or Deliverance from Pain, is the *raison d'être* of the whole Buddhist way of life. It is to reach Nirvāṇa that a man becomes a monk.[1]

5. What, then, is the way, or path, or "vehicle" for reaching the Nirvāṇa? Simply this: Absence of Desire.[2] Buddhists prove that everything which happens to us is the necessary result of our former actions performed in some past life: by a legitimate induction, they argue that all the acts of *this* life must therefore reach maturity and bear fruit in a future yet to be. Now, whatever be this life—even divine—we must shun it: for the gods themselves are unhappy, foreseeing their imminent fall. To avoid new birth, a man must refrain from action; or rather from the act which proceeds from or leads to Desire. Hence the method followed by the Jaïnas—suicide by starvation—sins against good sense: for it proceeds from the desire of being free from the misery of life, and will, in consequence, lead the suicide into some hell or heaven. The Buddha therefore traced laws which should enclose the life of his monks in a fine network of moderate mortifications, of tranquillizing, almost soporific meditations, eminently favourable

[1] For another way of regarding the Nirvāṇa, see below, p. 14.

[2] So far, this is pure Brahminism, if we replace the word Nirvāṇa by Brahmă, Supreme or Undifferentiated Being, 0 and ∞.

to peace, renunciation, and absence of desire. It is from the fundamental principle of Retribution following on all actions that this further principle of non-desire and non-action logically proceeds; and similarly, a rule of life which facilitates and engenders the extinction of desire.

6. But Buddhists are far from simply holding that life is not worth living; that things are as though they were not; that our Ego, doomed to passion and suffering, is hateful; in a word, that all is vanity, and that a man must renounce himself: they transport all these negations from the moral sphere, where it may well be they first arose (Senart), into the realm of metaphysics and psychology. On the one hand, they brand as heretics all who teach annihilation after death; for, say they with much good sense, if a man denies a future life, he is bound either to fall into despair, or to abandon himself to pleasure and to passion: he will heap high his sins; he will damn himself. On the other hand, they hold as indispensable for successful meditation the recognition of the non-existence of what can be called the Ego. On this Ego the Brahmins were not of one mind. Some (the Sāṃkhyas) admitted the existence from all eternity of individual beings united to a "subtle body," possessing by this union the faculty of intelligence, and transmigrating till such time as they should attain to ultimate solitude, deprived for the future of all awareness, and sheltered from all pain. The rest, who set the tone for orthodoxy, believed that the Ego, or "breath" (*ātman*), participated in the being of the Supreme Being (*brahmă*), and by its union with individualistic actions and contingencies was subjected to all the pains of transmigration. For both schools, it will be seen, the true nature of the Self transcends the body, sensation, and thought: the psychological complexus envelops an individual substance, or the supreme substance, without modifying it, but finding in it a kind of support. The Buddhists,

on the other hand, or at least the great majority, taught that sensations, acts, and thoughts, etc., are all self-existent, while there is no *being* existing which thinks, feels, and acts. Convinced partisans, as they are, of Transmigration, they stoutly deny the existence of any being with transmigrates. They are never wearied of denouncing the folly of those who, while still believing in a Self, hope ever to achieve deliverance. "It is even more foolish to consider Thought as the Self than to call the body a Self. For, after all, the body can live to be a hundred years old, while the thought perishes from moment to moment." "While we believe in the Self, we love the Self, we hate the enemies of the Self, we muse on the past and the future of the Self: clearly we cannot eradicate Desire as long as we believe in the substantial existence of the Self; and nothing is less reasonable than so to believe therein."

7. To this contradictory doctrine of the non-existent yet transmigratory Self must be added another, still more disconcerting. *Nirvāṇa*, as we have said, is a return into Brahmā from which Brahmā has been eliminated, and described in terms which are familiar to the Brahmins in their account of man's last end and deliverance from suffering. Yet a great number of texts exist which lead us to conceive of the *Nirvāṇa* not as an indescribable Beyond, but as the calm of the monk, exempt from all desire, peacefully awaiting death. Of the serenity of a monk who has arrived at this high degree of "ataraxia" or of quietism, and to whom is given the name *arhat*, we might say that he has the Nirvāṇa-on-earth, the foretaste and sure pledge of the true *Nirvāṇa*: for the *arhat*, once dead, will never live again: and further, that his is the "*Nirvāṇa* (or refreshment) from the fire of passion," as opposed to the *Nirvāṇa* of after-death, "refreshment from the fire of existence." But we have here more than a mere paradox or metaphor: complete detachment from

all earthly things in the midst of all the special advantages of a monastic life, and fragrant, as it were, with ecstasies, appears to the Buddhist (according to many documents at any rate) as the Good-in-Itself: and it is difficult—desirous as one may be to avoid this conclusion, and attractive as may be the arguments to the contrary—to refrain from recognizing in Buddhism a school highly disdainful of metaphysics and highly sceptical as to any future life, the value of Action, Transmigration, or of the final End. I doubt, however, whether these tendencies of Buddhist psychology deserve to be entitled doctrines: still, they undeniably exist, and certainly call for notice.

8. We must give up all hopes of understanding Buddhists if we do not diagnose in them what Barth has frankly called a "cerebral paralysis": this alone can explain their contradictions, both in the intellectual and in the sensitive fields. Most metaphysical systems contain antinomies: Brahminist philosophy does not arrive at harmonizing its doctrines concerning universal being and individual being—good, evil, happy or unhappy: the deists (*aiśvarikas*), who assert a sovereign and merciful God, and yet fail to obtain any clear idea of a being created and yet free, and indeed admit a deterministic "premotion" of the creature by God, are sore put to it to explain the existence of hell: ourselves, we can only elude the solemn antinomies of these problems by distinguishing the time for believing from that of judging, and by a severe application of methodical logic: we hold the ends of the chain, acquired truths, in spite of the fact that many of the intermediate links are invisible. But, as an Indian scholar has said, "the contradictions of Buddhism are not only radical, which I would forgive (and understand), but they are brutal, and unaware in their very brutality": they are, moreover, so to say, useless, for the life of renunciation, the way to *Nirvāṇa*, which is the essential part of Buddhism, is almost

identical with the object of the Brahmin panegyrics, and could easily be reconciled with their principles.

Here there exists, nor can we deny it, a genuine enigma, for on many points the Buddhists prove themselves good enough dialecticians. To solve it, we have, I think, a choice between two hypotheses.

A. The first rests upon a number of texts which indicate the possibility of an "intermediate path" between the affirmation and negation of personality, between the belief in annihilation in the *Nirvāṉa* and in eternal existence in the *Nirvāṉa*. The Buddha, when he was inquired of by his disciples, anxious to know exactly what he thought about the matter, and driven literally to bay, answered thus:—

"I teach an intermediate way. I condemn the opinion which distinguishes between the subject and the sensation—the Self and the psychic Phenomenon—and also the opinion which declares that the subject is not other than the Sensation. . . . He who believes in survival in the *Nirvâna*, and he who denies survival in the *Nirvâna*, both alike I condemn. You have no cause to weary yourselves over such problems. You must distinguish between the questions which I solve and those which I refuse to explain to you. What is it that I will not explain to you? Problems which are of no avail unto salvation, and which you could not seek into without falling into appalling errors. What do I explain to you? Necessary knowledge: that is, that existence is painful; that existence is produced and renewed from life to life by desire; that man may be delivered from existence; but only by deliverance from desire."

These are the "Four Noble Truths," or, perhaps, the "Four Truths of the Nobles," *i.e.* the Buddhists.

We may therefore believe, and elsewhere I have laboured to point out the advantages of this hypothesis, that the Buddha maintained an essentially pragmatic attitude. He knew that he would save creatures from new births (in which he believed with all his soul) to lead them to *Nirvāṉa* (in which he believed also, but without understanding it, for by its very definition it is ineffable), if only he could disgust them with desire—that is, desire of pleasure, of existence, of non-existence. As doctor of the fever

which is named Desire, he employs, in his treatment, allopathic remedies. "There is no personality: hence do not wish to be born as a god. There are new births; so, if you commit sin, you will burn in hell or be reborn as ghost or earth-worm." *Nirvāṇa* is not existence: do not therefore desire *Nirvāṇa* as you might a paradise; that is the surest way of never getting there. *Nirvāṇa* is not non-existence; so do not go doing good actions, and apply your merits to possess celestial nymphs in the heaven of Indra or of Brahmâ! *Nirvāṇa* is far better than all that!—The Buddha therefore appears to have taught a sort of agnosticism, limited, however, to problems touching the essential nature of things; while his disciples pushed his nihilist doctrines to their logical extremes, which they then hailed as true; for such negations he did indeed recommend at times, as conducive to the suppression of desire and to mental hygiene.

However, albeit this explanation may appear to be coherent, it is very far from being inevitable. If such had indeed been the Master's mind, would he not have revealed it—not indeed with more force, for he certainly expresses himself in this sense, and not seldom, with all imaginable energy and lucidity—but with more consistency? For, to tell the truth, he often loses it from sight, and the texts in which it is preponderant, considerable in themselves, are yet of but little bulk in relation to the mass of the scriptures, that is, if we compare them with the passages which positively deny personality, or prove such denials, and *eo ipso*, nor merely implicitly, make of the Nirvāṇa the mere dissipation of the fleeting elements of the unsubstantial Self.[1]

We must in all loyalty conclude that the doctrine of the "middle road between negation and affirmation" is a phase of Buddhist belief, may serve as a fixed point for the systematizing of a coherent body

[1] In this extremely obscure matter, it might be "argued" that the texts relating to the inanity of the Ego are but apocryphal interpolations.

of doctrine, and was, quite possibly, taught by the founder himself (for it is wholly improbable that it was a sheer invention of his "nihilist" and "dogmatizer" disciples, as they are on the whole); but that we dare not, from the point of view of dogma or of history, regard it as the root or foundation of Buddhism.

B. The second hypothesis has one serious drawback. It tends to deny the authenticity of the scriptures.[1] Just as the philosophical scriptures of old Brahminism (the *Upanishads*) were elaborated in different schools, form various traditions, and were finally promoted as a whole to the dignity of revealed matter; just as, in spite of their obvious anachronisms and contradictions, they present an indisputable family likeness—the same preoccupations concerning immortality; the same audacious speculations upon the Brahmă, and upon the roads which lead thereto, and so on—even so the speculations which, developed in a highly stylized diction, constitute the Buddhist scriptures, must, it is argued, have seen the light at different centres, have been codified and canonized as "Words of the Buddha" by the divers groups of ascetics or of thinkers who claimed to be clients of Sākyamuni.

A notable feature of Buddhist speculation, even when on the same subjects, is its opposition to Brahmin speculation: Brahmâ, the supreme God, is treated with very little consideration by the Buddha, who pitilessly ridicules the worshippers of Brahmâ, for being ignorant of the nature of their God.

To the transcendent natural philosophy of the Brahmins, the Buddha opposes a theory of the production of pain which may indeed at the outset have been merely that,[2] but which contains, and not alone in germ, a theory of Becoming, freed from all notion of substance (*pratītyasamutpāda*). This theory flaunts

[1] For reasons impossible to set out here, we confess that we are for believing, at least in the broad sense, in their authenticity.

[2] As P. Oltramare, in his *Douze Causes* (Geneva, 1909), has with much shrewd originality pointed out.

itself all through the scriptures as an unparalleled and fundamental discovery. Yet the Buddhists, by proclaiming that all existence is pain, merely insist on the Brahmin view, that the Contingent and the Painful are identical: still, they speak as if this too were a discovery of the Buddha. In a word, even where it borrows, Buddhism sets itself in deliberate opposition to Brahminism. And we may believe that this frenzy for denying—destined to lead not alone to the denial of the Sufferer, but also of Pain, not alone of the Substance, but also of the Phenomena—was nourished by the exigencies of controversy. The controversial spirit may well explain many of the contradictions of the older Buddhism.

9. But we cannot reflect too deeply on the profound observation of Barth, that Brahmins and Buddhists are brothers albeit they theoretically hate one another: that the Buddhist *Sûtras* and Brahmin *Upanishads*—stylized and sententious; profound but unsystematic respectively—breathe often the self-same spirit of a mystical life, remote from all materialism, haughtily moral, but disastrously tending towards ecstasy and "meditation void of content," without which man can attain neither to Brahmă nor to *Nirvāṇa*. The ancient schools of Buddhism, divergent often on metaphysical points (some even believe in personality), and the equally divided Brahmin schools—monists, theists, atheists, devotees—are all, practically, at one on the holy life which leads to salvation.

Strange and paradoxical as it may appear, the doctrinal opposition within Buddhism and Brahminism, and of the one to the other, has rightly been compared, not to the struggles which, in the West, existed and exist between believer and unbeliever, orthodox and heretic, but to those which were found between the various Catholic congregations—Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits. The questions whether there is, in or under the psychological complexus, a "person"; whether the world is governed by a Lord (*îśvara*), ruler

if not creator of the universe; if the Deliverance be a happy life or ultimate repose,—have a bearing analogous, in practice, to the discussion on Universals or on Physical Premotion. From the merely logical standpoint, if either of the opposing theses is pushed to its ultimate results, disaster is the consequence, and irreparable mental divorce. But, with the exception of a few individuals, the Western schools of which we spoke could remain orthodox; and *a fortiori*, in India —where there is not, and never could be, any orthodoxy—Buddhists and Brahmins remain really brothers, drawing their life from the same source of mysticism, the same hypnotic formulæ, the same aspirations towards perfect bliss by way of renunciation.

On the fundamental point they are, therefore, in harmony: they anathematize sceptics who deny the after-life or transmigration, heaven and hell. And notice, once the doctrine of transmigration is admitted, the greatest freedom of speculation on Being, Soul, God, is possible. It may be said that the question of the existence of God has, among ourselves, no little of its importance from the fact that we closely connect with it that of our last End. The Indians share in this point of view absolutely not at all: be there or be there not a personal God, we shall eat of the fruit of our acts, and we shall attain to the perfect bliss of final deliverance by asceticism and true knowledge. Similarly, the question of our own personality is chiefly important for us, from the consideration that if man is, as materialists will have it, a mere series of sensations, of thoughts without substratum, death is clearly the end of any self there is. The Indian schools, even the Buddhist (at least originally), remained very close to the old animist belief: the soul which transmigrates is for them no spiritual principle, no transcendent "noumenon," but a subtle duplicate of the body and of the energizing psychological organism—a wraith. For the Buddhist, it matters not at all, in practice,

whether this organism exists as a whole in itself or be complex: our body and thought no doubt change from moment to moment, yet remain the same, as child and adult are the same, though utterly different. Exactly this is the relation of the Being existing in this life with the reincarnate Being, though death have intervened. The problem of the existence of a God (who is denied by all Buddhists) and of that of a substantial personality (which is denied by the majority) are but triflings of a theological description, of minor importance in the practical or spiritual life, bitterly as they may be discussed.

10. Though they deny God, Buddhists cling to the gods. To a metaphysic which could give points to those of our best equipped of sceptics,[1] they ally a mythology not much better than those of savages, such as is, in fact, that of the ordinary Hindu. Gnomes, nymphs, vampires, demons, moral and kindly gods, beings malignant to those who do not win their favour by gifts, or have no talisman to counteract their ill-will—nothing of this is excluded. The monks saw to that—partly for their own sakes, far more for that of their clients. For lay-folk and ordinary Buddhists, the important thing in life is to live it out comfortably; the gods help one here not a little; and also to win a new birth in some paradise (*svarga*) of "moderately quintessential joys." The Buddha insists often and much on the joys of heaven, the pains of hell, and exact retribution. He condemns the Hindu gods who reject his Pentalogue; he or his successors have certainly adopted measures well suited to keep superstition at a fairly low state of thought and emotion,[2] at least in the Order of monks.

11. We must here touch on a problem as important as obscure and variously solved. In later Buddhism,

[1] Their theory of Becoming in terms of Causes is, taking it all in all, a *chef d'œuvre*.

[2] The horrible flood of Hindu demonology—Tantrism—overwhelmed Buddhism as it overwhelmed Brahminism.

just before or contemporaneously with the beginning of our era, the personality of the Buddha himself came to dominate the whole scheme of Buddhist dogma and piety. Śākyamuni was magnified, deified: sublime beings were invented, in the past and in the present, themselves Buddhas, and constituting a peculiar sort of polytheism. Simple folk hoped for a new birth in some Paradise (e.g. *Sukhāvatī*, or Happy World) where quasi-eternal Buddhas (e.g. *Amitābha*, "infinite light"; by another name *Amitāyus*, "infinite life"; the Amito of the Chinese, and a centre in China of a practically monotheist cult) sit on thrones, and whither devotees are carried by the grace of great saints, Buddhas-to-be, *e.g.* Avalokiteśvara, the Chinese Kwan-Yin: sages and spiritual folk proposed to become Buddhas themselves throughout endless series of lives of charity and meditation. We have reason to think that at a period far nearer the origins, certain sects believed Śākyamuni to be a magical apparition of a true Śākyamuni who had never left his heaven, where he reigned in a profound and serene meditation—the destiny of all perfect beings in possession of true knowledge. Finally, the oldest layers of Buddhist literature, the Pāli texts, consider Śākyamuni now as a man, a doctor in philosophy, a preacher of parables, and now as supernatural in essence, and relate his anterior existences. He is known to have descended from heaven, fully conscious, into the womb of Māyā; his body was marked with extraordinary symbols which are found, too, on some solar gods of Brahminism; before him other Buddhas had arisen, and revealed the same truths, and founded the self-same Order. And we are sure that from the very outset a cult of the relics of Śākyamuni was instituted, though the monks held themselves at first aloof from this.

Undoubtedly we must give a large place in the history of nascent Buddhism to the personality of its founder, and the impression he made on crowds of simple folk by no means preoccupied with *Nirvāṇa*

and the philosophy of Being. Though, to judge by the older literature taken as a whole, we must judge of Śākyamuni as a man who has reached a detachment to which all can aspire, and who is on the brink of entering that Nirvāṇa which is the common lot; though "all cult of adoration be contrary to the fundamental principle of Buddhism" (Senart), and though Śākyamuni, once passed away, "invisible to gods and men," be certainly out of all relation with his faithful; yet, as discoverer of the truth of salvation and the supreme manifestation of all its virtues, he possessed among the monks a prestige which it is hard to measure and reconcile with the dogma of his final disappearance. To enter into the way of Deliverance, *i.e.* to become truly a Buddhist, a man must have recourse to the Buddha, to the doctrine he preached, to the confraternity he founded. The cult paid to the Buddha—chiefly an offering of flowers—has a funerary character (A. M. Boyer): the commemoration of the Buddha, parallel to the "commemoration of the Doctrine," has no touch of divine worship in it, but has still less likeness to the cult by Lucretius of the idealized Epicurus, his master in philosophy. Even in the case of a monk profoundly convinced of the non-existence of the Buddha in the *Nirvāṇa*, we must never forget the gulf which separates the Eastern from the Western mind. The Buddhist scholastic attributes to the meditation on the vanished saint an influence which puts passion to flight, and prepares the way for the peace, the silence of sense and thought, which is the Nirvāṇa-upon-earth; and that without any intervention of the saint himself. No matter if he be no more in relation with his faithful: they are in relation with him, and "pacify" themselves in him. There is sincere fervour in the cult of the dead Buddha.

On the other hand, the Buddha's converts—pious women, ascetics, fire-worshippers, etc.—brought into the confraternity pious cravings, mythologies, speculations of all sorts, to which the strict doctrine had no

answer to make, though it did not forbid them. No doubt the lay-devotees, merchants or kings who looked after the funeral expenses, tended to adoration more readily than the intellectualist Brothers. To their influence doubtless was due the master's apotheosis and the mythological guise in which his legend, probably soon enough, decked itself out. For many Hindus, some time or other, the Buddha became a great god; the greatest of all, for the Buddhists. To the relic-cult was added that of symbols representing him, noticeably solar in character; last of all came image-cult. Western artists gave their services: in North-West Indian bas-reliefs and statuary a special and most curious chapter of the history of Greek art is to be read. Patronized in the land of its birth (Magadha = Patna) by King Aśoka (third century B.C.), propagated by him throughout Hindustan and in Ceylon, Buddhism ultimately converted the semi-Turkish King Kanishka (first century A.D.?) and thus entered Upper Asia. Just as the picturesque legend of the Buddha, his pre-existences (jātakas), so often seen in sculptures, and his final phase of life, had perhaps contributed more than anything else to the spread of his cult beyond the limits of the confraternity, so the rich statuary of North-West India, confirmed by the latest layers of the literature, proves that the peoples there adored, in the Buddhas, essentially benevolent, nay, merciful and loving gods, highly moral and by no means jealous. Popular Buddhism has always been strongly tinged with superstition.—Among the Buddhas we must mention Amitābha, thoroughly solar in character, and king of a realm situated near the sunset; elsewhere the sun himself is but a Buddha, burning, for the salvation of creatures, his body destined, phœnix-like, to re-birth.

12. We are constantly hearing of the compassion, pity, and charity which the Buddha is said to have held for a necessary virtue. Some have actually maintained that love of one's neighbour and com-

passion for suffering was the mainspring, the *raison d'être*, of Buddhism. Oldenberg has recently[1] shown that this is false. The Buddhist, fain to destroy in himself all desire, evidently becomes perfectly impassible when he definitely draws near to sanctity.[2] But one of the conditions of pacification of desire is a general benevolence, pouring out towards people in general, anonymous beings at the four points of the compass, a perfect, equable benevolence, which distinguishes neither parents, friends, nor enemies. However, into the egotistic complacency in which the monk is so glad to live, healthy, calm, and peaceable amidst men sick, anxious, and at strife, is infused an element of keen pity and tenderness for unhappy souls who are ignorant of the truth, which expresses itself in the significant words: "Thou must love all creatures as a mother loves her children." Again, the cenobitic life, and the relations which must exist between monks who are all "sons of Śākya," show how necessary is concord,[3] even affection: in the oldest literature even, fine passages exist: "Ye, O monks, have no mothers and no fathers to wait on you [when you are ill]. If ye wait not one upon the other, who is there indeed who will wait upon you? Whosoever would wait upon Me, he should wait upon the sick." And the Buddha, in contrast to other founders of sects, tells his lay clients to give alms not only to his own monks but to their rivals. This is remarkable and fine. Lastly, the Buddha's own character, his mission of saviour of the world by way of preaching, the belief that he had put off his own *Nirvāṇa* out of pity for this universal suffering which was the starting-point of his doctrine, and that his greatness was due to extraordinary works of asceticism and charity,

[1] *Deutsche Rundschau*, 1908.

[2] A husband turned monk says to his wife: "Though thou shouldst cast thy son to the jackals, thou shouldst not decide me, unhappy woman, to return for love of thy son!"

[3] The Buddha condemns discord and schism as capital crimes: he says explicitly that it is the *more reasonable* who must give in.

brought about the insertion in the biography of his earlier lives of a quantity of heroic incidents of self-sacrifice. Here, no doubt, the Buddhists have drawn from Indian folklore; but it is the glorification of compassion which they have chiefly sought for.[1]

Hence, in later Buddhism, many adepts renounced the acquisition of the *Nirvāṇa* in this life, and vowed to become Buddhas themselves for the salvation of the world. This new form is called the Great Vehicle, because it carries the soul not to an immediate, but to far distant, *Nirvāṇa*, passing through the mid-state of Buddha, and because it thus transports not monks alone but the married; and in this way Buddhism connected pity, as an indispensable means to salvation, as closely as it well could, with the worship of Buddhas and future Buddhas who had almost reached their goal and were already reigning with the Buddhas in paradises. Finally, recognizing the Buddhas as Heavenly Fathers, the faithful had a solid reason to love their neighbour: "The Buddhas, who are all compassion, have adopted all creatures as their real Selves . . . . to honour creatures is to honour the Buddhas. To make creatures suffer is to make the Buddhas suffer. . . . Save by serving creatures, how shall we win pardon from the Buddhas?"[2] Here we have pity, or charity, properly so-called. But it especially consists in vowing to become a Buddha for the salvation of the world, for Buddhas alone can save; instead of entering at once into the *Nirvāṇa*,

[1] We may, however, prefer the Brahmin legend of the bride who by her own free death ransoms her husband from death, and many human and "sweetly reasonable" traits of Brahminism to the grotesque charity of the Śākyamuni to be, who gave his limbs, his wife and his children to a beggar; or, during his hare-incarnation, had himself roasted to make a meal for a Brahmin.

[2] Ancient Buddhism, on the other hand, tells how King Prasenajit said to his wife Jasmin: "Is there anyone thou lovest better than thyself?" "No: and thou?" "No one." The king and queen relate this dialogue to the Buddha. "Traverse the whole world," he said, "and one will find nobody to which anything is dearer than his Self: so too one's neighbour's Self is dear to him: so he who loves himself injures not his neighbour."

many a millennium of successive existences will have to be lived—happy, however, all of them; if mortal sin be committed, the sinner yet shall have a special hell, "*au régime de la pistole*" (Barth): and again, it consists in applying all one's merits to the salvation of creatures, that they themselves may become Buddhas; and further, in practising the supreme gift of preaching, helping the unhappy, or brethren less well-off for alms, when one is a monk; if one is lay, in providing monks with food and endowing monasteries: finally, in offering painful gifts, one's flesh and marrow, and even bones—though this seems to be pure theory, and in the opinion of reasonable folks the example of the future Śākyamuni, who had himself devoured by a tigress lest she should commit the awful crime of eating her own cubs, is not one to be followed.

13. In the rough we may say that we find in Buddhism, especially its later forms, many notions which recall Christianity—vows of chastity, confession, charity, and a condemnation of all forms of egoism: invocation of powerful saints, participation in their merits, etc.: but, even without taking into consideration the totality of the two systems, which are in flagrant contradiction, the very notions which appear most similar, are separated, when we analyze them, by the whole depth and width of the great gulf fixed between the European and the Hindu mentality. Yet though we may see in Buddhism these weaknesses, this incurable "cerebral paralysis" of its doctors, this debauch of mysticism, dialectic and myth, yet, in this chapter of the religious history of India, we must own to something very great. The Buddha was perhaps the earliest of India's saviour-men; his monastic rule is very wise, and survived unchanged in a number of monasteries which it keeps at a very lofty level, moral, spiritual, and religious; and no doubt he has developed in the Hindu mind the notion of personal responsibility, of duty, of benevolence, and of gentleness.

For a Buddhist to think or to say, "May I, during all the periods of the Cosmos during which creatures die of hunger and thirst, be food and drink for all creatures," is infinitely more meritorious, and more useful, than to give a glass of water to any individual. To print horses on bits of paper and throw them to the winds, is, for the Lamas of Tibet, far more useful to the traveller, than to open to him the gates of the monastery. Buddhism is permeated with the most intense idealism: many schools assert that thought alone exists; others, that nothing exists; even thought is an illusion which shall expire in the *Nirvāṇa*. On the adoration of the Buddhas, on the practice of charity, these doctrines cannot but leave their impress. Reasonable as, in certain of its aspects, Buddhism may seem, sympathetic as may be the sincere piety of many of its writers, curious and touching as may be its legend, and however remarkable, from every point of view, its propagation, we must not forget that Buddhism arose amid penitents and devotees of ill-balanced brain, was developed in the heart of Hinduism, in the cloister, for the cloister, and by means of it. Hence, as a whole, its character is artificial, its literature thoroughly academic; it develops extravagantly a few commonplaces — pity, universal void, misogyny; its dialectic loves classification and hairsplitting; it issues into chill abstractions only. Buddhists have gone one better than any other Indian sect, except, in certain details, the Jaïnas. Their hells are more complicated and grotesque than any other. It was they who invented the punishment whereby the tongue of the damned soul is dragged out over a dozen leagues to be torn in detail by demons; their charity can evolve the saint who, by multilocation, gets his corpse into every cemetery that every animal, by feeding on it, may merit a rebirth in the heavens of Buddhahood. And, in Buddhism, no rule of faith, no authority exists which may separate religions from pseudo-religions, and

mythological extravagances from the sane tradition.

To conclude, I detect in what I have said nothing which may strictly be called "apologetic." It is absurd to suppose that Christianity can be injured by comparing it to Buddhism; see Buddhism as it is, and you cannot dispute the superiority of Christianity. But let us carefully note that this superiority—at least to the extent to which a historian of religion is called upon to judge of it—is primarily that of the Western mind over the Hindu. Pythagoras taught that charity consisted in helping one's neighbour to shoulder his burden, not to carry it. A theologian, therefore, may demand from specialists a specialist's description of a pagan religion; but he will not ask to have pointed out what profit apologetics may derive therefrom.[1]

[1] "It was announced," writes Dr. Jordan (*Comparative Religion: its Genesis and Growth*, by L. H. Jordan, 1905, T. & T. Clark), "that there was a remarkable and fundamental similarity between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism: and this declaration was put forth in the name of Comparative Religion! All will remember how the science which was thus airily summoned as a witness, and which was thus relied upon to furnish the chief support of this theory, proved to be its most remorseless critic" (p. 411). Weber, Count Goblet d'Alviella, and others are of opinion that Christian writings were used by Buddhists to "enrich the Buddhist legend, just as the Vishnuites built up the legend of Krishna on many striking incidents in the life of Christ," and just as Syro-Greek art certainly gave a Christian aspect to much North-West Indian sculpture. "Buddhism is absolutely ignored in the literary and archæological remains of Palestine, Egypt, and Greece. There is not a single ruin of a Buddhist monastery or *stupa* in any of these countries; not a single Greek translation of a Buddhist book; not a single reference in all Greek literature to the existence of a Buddhist community in the Greek world" (C. F. Aiken, *Buddhism*, in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, iii. pp. 32, 33). All testimony conspires to establish the independent growth of Buddhism and Christianity. It was therefore permissible to exclude from these pages, in which a description of the truth has been attempted, the unnecessary refutation of what is false. A most interesting correspondence between Professor Rhys Davids and Cardinal Newman on this subject may be read in Mr. W. S. Lilly's *The Claims of Christianity*, c. 2. pp. 25–36. And see the Introduction to *Bouddhisme: Opinions, etc.*, by the writer of this lecture, quoted in the Bibliography. The legend of SS. Barlaam and Josaphat is a Christian pious tale based on the legend of Śākyamuni. The examination of the thesis, that the Christian and Buddhist accounts, though developed independently, yet made use of identical and older folklore data, is too difficult to be attempted here.—TR.

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Neo-Buddhism is, if I may be permitted to express my personal opinion, at once frivolous and detestable, and dangerous, perhaps, for very feeble intellects.

HINDUISM

By Ernest R. Hull, S.J.

The main object of this paper is to describe Hinduism as a concrete working reality among the Hindu people to-day. The variety of its forms and its general promiscuousness make the presentation an extremely difficult task, especially as Hinduism is entirely unformulated in any official creed or code or standard handbook of theological or moral instruction. Whatever Hinduism may be, one thing however is clear. It is essentially a traditional inheritance from ancient times,—not indeed a primeval deposit handed down unchanged in crystalline form, but a residual deposit resulting from a long process both of accretions and decretions, developments and modifications—, so that it has never been one and the same thing in successive periods of the past, and is never altogether the same thing among different sections of the people themselves. In order, therefore, to understand the meaning of Hinduism, it is not enough to enumerate the various existing elements which make up the whole. It is necessary also to see how these elements have come together, and the idea and motive which has lain at the back of them. And this is possible only through a comprehensive view of the history of the entire development from earliest times.

The "Aryan" Immigration

The origins of Hinduism are conveniently named "Aryan." Although to-day we have little belief in an Aryan *stock* (and even Aryan language is now supposed to have spread from the shores of the Baltic or the Black Sea rather than from Central Asia, which used to

be considered the cradle of the Aryan race), there was, at all events, at some unascertainable date, an "Aryanizing" of the Indian people, founded, doubtless, in an immigration from somewhere of "noble" or "Aryan" invaders. The peoples whom they found already occupying the country were of two sorts, probably representing two earlier migrations—first, the "Kolarians," still surviving in remnants among the hill tribes of Central India; and secondly, the "Dravidians," who even now predominate in the southern half of the country. These peoples were partly subjugated by the Aryan immigrants and partly left untouched in the more inaccessible districts. Of those subjugated races some remained more or less unmixed, while others gradually intermingled and formed semi-Aryan tribes. Both these previous populations had their own distinct forms of religion; and (though it would require much detailed study to be definite) it is certain that they contributed many of the grosser elements which afterwards went to make up the congeries of later Hinduism—animistic beliefs, fetish, stone, image, and demon worship, and a multiplicity of local deities of low type.

First Period: 1500–1000 B.C.

Our sole knowledge of the early Aryan worship is derived from the sacred books called the Vedas, of which a very brief account must now be given. First and oldest comes the *Rig Veda*, a collection of religious hymns, which on the one hand embody the conception of one sublime deity, and on the other hand so personificate the powers of nature as to make them seem separate gods—Dyospita, the shining one, or father and superior of the sky (the Zeus of the Greeks, and Jupiter, supreme God of Rome[1]); Varuna, the god of the dark sky; Mitra, god of the bright sky;[2] Indra, god of the cloudy sky (or of rain); Agni, the god of

[1] *Cf.* xi. 16; xiii. 15.
[2] *Cf.* x. 16; x. *passim*; xvi. 5 and *passim*.

fire; Surya, god of the sun; Savitri, Pushan, and finally *Vishnu* — at that time a sun-god of quite inferior note; Vayu, god of the air; the Maruts, or storm gods; Rudra, father of the Maruts, a third-rate deity, but (like Vishnu) elevated in later times to a position of supreme prominence under the name of *Siva*; Yama, the first of the Blessed (*i.e.* of men elevated to heaven), afterwards the dread king of hell; the Aswins, healers of men; Ushas, goddess of dawn; Saraswati, goddess of a river of that name, and now surviving as the goddess of eloquence, etc. —making in all a total of thirty-three—eleven in heaven, eleven on earth, and eleven in mid-air. Each of these objects was separately worshipped as supreme by prostrations, oblations, sacrifices of the goat, cow, horse, and even man. It is difficult to judge how far they were regarded polytheistically as distinct divinities, or monotheistically as various aspects of one and the same all-pervading power. Enough to say that a noble and elevated tone pervades the hymns throughout, far different from that of most later literature. In fact, in no instance is the downward tendency from primitive to later times more strongly manifested than in the history of Hinduism viewed from the starting-point of the Rig Veda, thus rendering difficult any theory of the consistent upward evolution of religions generally. Even Rig-vedism itself seems already to mark a downward departure from a more primitive belief in one God. In certain social points, too, now identified religiously with Hinduism, the same evidence appears. In the Rig-vedic times caste was unknown. Even the priest-class were men of the world, and in no way an exclusive racial clique.[1] Women were in full enjoyment of a healthy social liberty and equality with men, sharers in sacrifice and praise; and some of them were counted even as priestesses. They married at a reasonable age, had some voice in the choice of their

[1] *Cf.* xiii. 18.

husbands, were free to re-marry, and the ritual suicide of *Sati* was unknown. The people had no religious restrictions in the use of meat and drink. The dead were sometimes cremated, but also sometimes buried. The chief aim of worship was indeed to secure prosperity in this world, but conceptions of sin and forgiveness were not wanting.[1] The people believed in the happiness of a future state, and the doctrine of transmigration was unknown. Neither (except in a few hymns of undoubtedly late origin) is there any suggestion of the pantheism of a later age, nor of any official intermingling of magic with religion.

Second Period: 1000–800 B.C.

By a convenient speculation, the compilation of the Rig Veda may be placed somewhere between 1500 and 1000 B.C., and its place of composition was the Punjab. With similarly convenient definiteness we can assign the composition of the other three Vedas to somewhere between 1000 and 800 B.C., during which time the Aryans pressed on from the country of the Indus and settled in the Jumna and Ganges plains as far eastwards as Behar. The literature which came into existence during this second period is as follows:—(1) *The Sama Veda*, a collection of sacrificial chants taken from the Rig Veda and arranged for solemn recitation or singing to music; (2) *The Yajur Veda*, a collection of sacrificial formulas; (3) *The Atharva Veda*, including a few late hymns from the Rig Veda, but consisting chiefly of "mantras"—spells against evil, incantations against diseases, imprecations against demons, sorcerers, and enemies, and charms for securing prosperity and success. This document may not indicate the *origin* of magic, but certainly reveals its gradual incorporation with religion, thus marking a clear stage of degradation.[2] For centuries it was not regarded as a

[1] *Cf.* xiii. 29.

[2] *Cf.* i. 9; xiii. 2.

sacred book, and only became incorporated into the canon after religious degeneracy had prepared the way.

Subsequently to the foregoing Vedas, and now at least regarded also as Vedas, came a series of commentaries called *Brahmanas*. They deal with the procedure of sacrifice, but are chiefly full of theological and mystical speculations, with citations from earlier authors now otherwise lost. They mark a time when the simple and natural worship of the Rig Veda had expanded into a totally artificial system, and presuppose as already accomplished the transformation which they represent.

Following on the Brahmanas came the *Aranyakas* or "forest lectures," to be read by Brahmins during their ascetical probation; and secondly the *Upanishads*, which show the beginnings of intellectual speculation in theology—not claiming at the time to be divine revelations, but "guesses at truth," and attempts to penetrate into the problems of the soul, the universe, and the Supreme Being. In some of these works there appears a strong tinge of pantheistic speculation, which was afterwards developed into a system.

Side by side with the religious transformations revealed by this literature, social changes of no less importance were taking place. The original divisions into four classes—if not indeed a pure myth from beginning to end—had been established, viz. the priests, warriors, and agriculturalists, with the Sudras or incorporated aborigines added as a fourth. It was only afterwards that caste developed into an iron-bound system of social division, and came to be identified with religion as it now is. The position of women and their privileges still remained almost unaffected, while flesh-eating was still in full vogue.

Third Period: 800–500 B.C.

Following on this comes the *Sutra* or so-called rationalistic period, which may be placed between 800

and 500 B.C.[1] It is named from the appearance of the Sutras—treatises of theology, philosophy, law, and domestic rites. Among these *Sutras* must be included the six *Darsanas*, Shastras, or systems of philosophy as follows:—(1) *Nyaya*, mainly a system of logic, and atheistic in character; (2) *Vaiseshika*, a system of atoms and eternal matter, which under criticism adopted the idea of God, but made souls eternal before and after, and independent of Him; (3) *Sankhya* (the classical system), originally atheistic, but modified so as to include God; (4) *Yoga*, atheistic adaptation of the Sankhya; (5) *Purva Mimansa*, an exegesis on the Vedas; (6) *Uttara Mimansa* (also called the Vedanta), divided into two systems—(*a*) the unqualified or extreme, which teaches pure idealism: "There is One, and no second"; the world is an unreal delusion of Maya; (*b*) the qualified Vedanta, which makes the world and souls realities, but still only forms of the One. Among these treatises the most celebrated is the Vedanta group, the contents of which is undoubtedly pantheistic. For though efforts have been made to use the more theistic portions as a key for the interpretation of the whole, the Vedantic philosophy is generally understood in such a way as to make the name "Vedantist" identical with "Emanative Pantheist." This group marks the climax of theological development in ancient literature—later writers having done nothing but evolve the teaching here contained into a more explicit and methodic form.

At the same time the old religion had in practice reached its most formalized condition; though, even so, there were as yet no temples, no images, and no fantastic mythology of gods and goddesses such as constitutes the entire make-up of later Hinduism.[2] No doubt the growth of the six Shastras or philosophies had already given rise to the distinction

[1] *Cf.* xi. 24–26.
[2] *Cf.* xii. 4; xiii. 4, 7.

between "esoteric" and "exoteric" Hinduism; philosophical pantheism prevailed among the select circle of the priestly caste, while the multifarious ceremonial cult of the people was connived at, fostered, and encouraged by them as the only form of religion suited to their lower capacities.

Buddhistic Period: 500 B.C. to 500 A.D.

Gautama Buddha,[1] founder of Buddhism in the sixth century B.C., who came with an answer to a growing aspiration after a purer and nobler form of faith, found all the materials out of which to select his theology in the literature already existing around him. The conception of Brahma as the unconscious All, producing souls and matter identical with himself by means of *Maya* or the principle of delusion; the eternity of the universe, souls, and matter before and after; the union of souls and matter, affording the condition for consciousness, desire, and action; karma, or the good and evil consequences of action; the transmigrations of souls through an indefinite series of lives; release from the series by uprightness of life; the attainment of the goal of human destiny by absorption into the All—these ideas are found already, some of them first hinted at in the Upanishads, and all of them expanded and systemized by the six systems of the Shastras, the latest dating a century or two before Buddha's time. What Buddha really did was this. First, he preached the unreality of the ritual worship prevalent among the people and the impotence of priestly ministrations; secondly, he set about popularizing selected portions of the esoteric Vedanta—in the light of which he substituted contemplation and self-restraint for ceremonial observances as the means of sanctification and salvation. In short, the original Buddhism seems to have been little more than the logical and practical (though

[1] *Cf.* iv. *passim.*

eclectic) use of intellectual Hinduism as a solvent to popular Hinduism. That Buddhism was merely a practical outcome of a pre-existing theology is perhaps shown from the fact that just before Buddha's time there had started quite independently a parallel movement on very similar lines, now known and still surviving under the name of Jainism.[1]

Buddhism spread gradually throughout the peninsula, but received its chief push forward from the powerful patronage of Asoka (*circa* 250 B.C.).[2] The country was soon covered over with Buddhistic temples and monasteries, whose material remains are still the delight of the archæologist and traveller. A monkish system was developed on lines so strangely parallel to those of Christian monasticism as to suggest imitation on one side or the other; but the likeness is fully explained by the co-ordinate working out of the same root-idea of discipline and self-restraint.[3]

Puranic Period: 500–1000 A.D.

Meantime Brahminism, though much weakened for a time, was by no means universally superseded, and gradually reasserted itself among the masses of the people—not indeed in the *Vedic* form existing prior to Buddhism, but in the *Puranic*, which was itself even a greater transformation from Vedic Brahminism than Vedic Brahminism had been from pure Rig-Vedism. The later or Puranic religion, the staple of modern Hinduism, embodied the full apparatus of a fanciful mythology, a large pantheon of gods and goddesses, very human and superhuman and preter-human and infrahuman, with spirits good and evil, represented by fantastic image-forms and worshipped with manifold rites. Every action in life and after life, great and small, was brought under the good and evil influences of these deities, and prosperity and

[1] *Cf.* iv. 7. [2] *Cf. ib.*, 24.
[3] *Cf. ib.*, 9, 10, 28.

adversity in life were made to depend upon ceremonial observances of a more or less magical character connected with their worship.

But what we want to say at this point is that Buddhism, with its exacting moral code resting on transcendental ideas, could not possibly hold its own among the masses of the people, especially when placed in rivalry with the attractive concreteness of the growing Puranic Brahminism. And so Buddhism was gradually drawn down to the level of its environment. Reverence for Buddha as a saint soon became worship of Buddha as a god. Other Buddhist saints were similarly deified, and there grew up a system of semi-polytheism, semi-saint-worship, in which the veneration of sacred places and relics formed the most prominent feature. This change had established itself by the early centuries of the Christian era; but any effective hold upon the mind of the people was not of long duration. For even with its new popular attractions Buddhism could hardly compete with the increasing popularity of Puranism, and the ever growing domination of the Brahminical caste. The result was that by the twelfth century A.D., Buddhism was practically obsolete in India, though it survived and still flourishes in Ceylon, Burma, Thibet, and elsewhere. Jainism, which went through a similar popularizing process, managed to survive in certain parts such as Gujerat, Rajputana, etc.; but for the rest, from this time forward the new or Puranic Brahminism prevailed throughout the length and breadth of India, and prevails still—being adopted not only by the Aryans, but also by the Dravidians of the south, and by such portions of the Kolarian tribes as had been drawn into connection with the Aryan race.

Puranic Hinduism

We have now reached that traditional deposit of religion which is meant by Hinduism in the ordinary

acceptance of the term. In point of contents it is extremely heterogeneous and complex, and in various degrees participated in piecemeal by different sections of the people; it permeates however the community as a whole, so that there is a remarkable uniformity of spirit and practice prevailing throughout the country. This unity is forced upon the traveller by the practical fact that the same features recur again and again in every part, so that after a short time he finds little or nothing new to be seen—a festival scene in the great Temple at Madura and another in the Golden Temple at Benares being undistinguishable except by locality. To put it philosophically, Hinduism, if taken analytically, divides up into an amazing complexity of diverse parts which it would take a volume to enumerate; but when looked at synthetically, it is the same one thing in its essential ideas wherever found. There are thousands of castes, each with its own distinctive religious practices, and there are scores of "sects" or different religious allegiances; and yet all share promiscuously in each other's practices, the Vishnavite mingling with the Sivaite, and the worshipper of Ganesh making no distinction when he comes in front of a shrine of Vittoba. The primary instinct to worship *something* is so strong that it issues readily in the worship of *anything*. Hence the Hindus even flock with Christians to the more famous Catholic shrines, and make their votive offerings to Our Lady just as they will make them the next day to Durga or Parvati. It is quite an ordinary thing to find a Christian grave of unknown origin turned into a Hindu shrine, and loaded with bits of rags and faded garlands and coco-nut shells smeared with butter by way of sacrifice.

Method of Synthesis

"Hinduism—that is, latter-day Hinduism," writes Hunter—"the Hinduism of the Puranas and after-

wards—is a social league and a religious alliance. As the various race-elements of the Indian peoples have been welded together, the simple old beliefs of the Veda, the mild doctrines of Buddha, and the fierce rites of the non-Aryan tribes have been thrown into the melting-pot, and poured out thence as a mixture of precious metal and dross to be worked up into the complex worship of the Hindu gods." Unfortunately our literary resources are too scanty to allow anything like a tracing of the whole process in detail. A few of the factors can, however, be indicated, even though their exact share in the results cannot be other than conjecturally assigned.

Starting from the fact that the systematization of later Hinduism was the work of the Brahmins and the stepping-stone to their ascendency, it is easy to understand that they would use every form of belief and practice already prevailing among the people as a means of securing their desired object. And in justification of this "accommodation" they had a magnificent instrument at their back. This was none other than the pantheistic philosophy of the Vedanta. According to this speculation, the whole universe is nothing but a kind of shadowy reflection of the One Infinite Supreme, being really identical with Him, and only by a delusive limitation of mind conceived as distinct. It thus becomes not only possible but inevitable to regard the whole world, and whatever is in it, not only as a manifestation of God, but as actually divine, and so capable of receiving divine worship. If, therefore, the people were found worshipping forces of nature, spirits, demons, animals, and even curiously shaped stones, there was no necessity to convert them from their errors. Once recognize the all-pervading divinity, and the worship can be sanctioned as legitimate and embodied into orthodox Hinduism without essential alteration.

Such is the explanation which you will get nowadays if you catechize a Brahmin priest about the

many bizarre worships which he encourages and perhaps takes part in; and it seems likely that such was the means by which a large part of the Hindu pantheon was created. Of the deities of Vedic times several have thus survived, *e.g.* Saraswati, Savitri, Vishnu, and Siva, the two latter of whom had by the decline of the Buddhist period assumed such importance as almost to eclipse all the rest, and to divide the country into two enormous sects, of which we shall have more to say later on. Besides these Vedic gods there were many others of local origin to be synthesized. Among them, in the first place, were the five brothers Pandavas, possibly historical persons, celebrated by the old epic called the Mahabharata (500 to 200 B.C.), and afterwards deified and worshipped collectively under the material form of five round stones grouped together. Shrines of this kind can be found along the roadsides in many parts of the country. Another was Rama, also a deified hero, celebrated in the epic called the Ramayana (similar date). In connection with him comes Hanuman, a warlike general having the form of a monkey, who was instrumental in the recovery of Rama's wife Sita, and who is still worshipped in many temples as the "Monkey-God." Then comes Krishna, the most popular of all, celebrated in several of the Puranas; probably also a historical personage of great prowess, afterwards deified and made the subject of a vast amount of mythology, and then the revealer of a religious philosophy. Among the rest may be mentioned Ganesh or Ganpati, a mythological youth whose head was cut off by his own father Siva, and replaced by that of an elephant, since when he has become the god of the domestic hearth and the patron of successful enterprise. These and a multitude of decidedly local gods, to say nothing of goddesses (Kali or Durga, Parvati, Mahaluxmi, etc. etc.), all found a place in the pantheon under the general category of manifestations or avatars. Even Buddha

himself was adopted as one among the avatars of Vishnu.

Siva and Vishnu

As the worship of Vishnu and Siva are almost the two substantial halves of popular Hinduism, it will be useful here to enter into summary particulars of the leading differences between them.

Siva	Vishnu
(1) Originally the vedic god Rudra, father of the storm gods, who gradually gained popularity. The cult was especially propagated by Sankaracharya in the eighth century A.D.	(1) Originally a minor sun-god of Vedic times, who gradually gained popularity. The cult was especially propagated by Ramanuja in the eleventh and Chaitanya in the fourteenth century A.D.
(2) A stern and exacting deity, standing aloof from men, who must raise themselves towards him by painful efforts.	(2) A bright and comfortable deity, who condescendingly comes down to the level of men by avatars or manifestations.
(3) He is worshipped by ascetical practices—"the way of works"—and propitiated by sacrifices of blood.	(3) He is worshipped with festal praise as a king by his courtiers in "the way of devotion," and not of works.
(4) His clients are distinguished by horizontal paint-marks on the brow.	(4) His clients are distinguished by the use of vertical paint-marks on the brow.
(5) The theology is pantheistic, and maintains the law of salvation by works as a means of final absorption into the divine.	(5) The theology tends to theism by emphasizing personal manifestations of the divinity. Salvation is a free gift of grace.
(6) The worship gives rise to numerous Jogis, and tends to acts of excessive penance, fanaticism, secret sects, and pious fraud.	(6) The worship tends to degenerate into licentiousness sanctified by religion (prostitution in temples, etc.).
(7) The worship of the linga or generative power is characteristic, as well as animal sacrifice. The objects worshipped are not regarded as avatars of the divinity, but as symbols of his attributes and powers.	(7) The principle of avatars favours polytheism and fetish by incorporating the worship of the fish, tortoise, boar, etc., and also of deified heroes as avatars of Vishnu.

The Avatars

The ten chief avatars or incarnations of Vishnu are as follows:—

(1) *Matsya, the fish.* Vishnu becomes a fish to save Manu, the first progenitor of the human race, from the deluge.

(2) *Kurma, the tortoise.* Vishnu appears as a tortoise in order to rescue certain valuable articles lost in the deluge.

(3) *Varaha, the boar.* Vishnu descended to rescue the world from a demon called Hiranyaksa who had plunged it beneath the sea.

(4) *Nara Sinha, the man-lion.* Vishnu, in the form of a half-man half-lion, delivers the world from a demon called Hiranya Kasipu, who had appropriated the sacrifices made to the gods.

These four avatars are said to have taken place in the Satya, the first or golden age of the world.

(5) *Vamana, the dwarf.* Vishnu descends as a dwarf to rescue the world from the power of the demon Bali. In two strides the dwarf passed over heaven and earth, but left the third or under world unreclaimed.

(6) *Parashu rama = Rama with the Axe.* Born to suppress the domineering of the Kshatrya or warrior caste over the Brahmin or priestly caste.

(7) *Rama Chandra, the mild or moon-like.* A Kshatrya prince and the hero of the Ramayana epic, who destroyed the demon Ravana.

These three occurred in the Treta, the second or silver age.

(8) *Krishna, the dark god*, the most popular of all. He appeared at the close of the Dvapara, the third or copper age, for the destruction of the tyrant Kansa, who represented the principle of evil. Details of his later life are woven into the Mahabharata epic, but his principal place is in the Puranas. Some say, however,

that he was not an avatar of Vishnu, but Vishnu himself.

(9) *Buddha*, adopted as the ninth incarnation in order to incorporate the Buddhists under the Brahmin domination.

(10) *Kalki*, who is yet to appear at the close of the fourth—the present—"kali" or iron age, riding on a white horse, and restoring the first or golden age once more. Hence the many votive images of horses ranged round the temples of southern India, in the hope of hastening his looked-for advent.

Some of the present-day Hindus are said to have adopted Queen Victoria (embodiment of the British power), and others, it is reported, have tried to adopt Christ, as additional avatars of Vishnu.

The word Avatar means "descent." Its metaphysics do not seem to have been explicitly analyzed. On the one hand, it is said that avatars are not incarnations in the sense of adopting or assuming a finite object into union with the godhead—that Krishna, for instance, is not God-made-man but God-made-manifest—God pure and simple, manifested under the appearance of a human form—theophany, not incarnation. On the other hand, different degrees of avatar are specified according to the proportion of divinity contained in the object, thus: (1) the full divinity, as Krishna; (2) half the divinity, as Rama; (3) quarter divinity, as Bharata; (4) one-eighth divinity, as Lakshmana and Satrughna; and (5) a mere infusion of divine powers and qualities into men, animals, plants, or even stones.

The Hindu Trinity

The cults of Vishnu and Siva were at first developed separately among different sections of the people. When the two forms of worship came face to face with each other their votaries maintained a sharp opposition between them as between two rival gods. But efforts

were made by the Brahmins to bring the two into harmony. This they did by putting forward Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva together as three different aspects of the one Supreme Being, viz. as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer respectively. More philosophically speaking, Brahma represents the principle of origination, Vishnu the principle of continuation, and Siva the principle of mutation—the destruction of one thing with the emergence of another. By this means was constructed the Hindu Trimurthi or Trinity, which came to be represented in concrete form by a three-headed and six-armed human figure. The two ways of devotion and of works were also synthesized into one called "the way of knowledge," and the Bhagavat Purana was written to express this combination. The scheme was successful. The two sects continued to exist distinct, but in peace and mutual tolerance, and the two worships soon came to be practised promiscuously by both parties alike.

How far the Hindu Trinity is in analogy with the Christian depends on the point of view. The Trimurthi was formed late enough to be an imitation of Christian doctrine, but is probably nothing of the kind, as its origin can be explained by the exigencies of Hinduism at the time. The problem was how to reconcile the claims of two rival divinities without sacrificing either, and at the same time to uphold the reality of Brahma himself as the one true God. And the solution by aspects, modes, or *rôles* (like the theory of Sabellianism) was the obvious way out of the difficulty. A pantheistic god can contain a million distinct hypostases just as easily as he can contain one. The Christian difficulty, "How can there be *processiones reales ad intra*, or a triplicity of really distinct hypostases in an infinitely simple substance?" is in pantheistic Hinduism extended to the whole universe, and takes the form "How can the One be also the manifold, or the unconditioned be also the conditioned?" The Christian meets the crux by reasserting the facts of

revelation, and leaving the *how* a strict mystery. The Hindu cuts the knot by saying that the manifold and the conditioned are not realities, but delusions of Maya, and that in truth there is "only the One, and no other."

Considering the prominence of Siva and Vishnu in the scheme of Hindu worship, it is strange to find that so little attention has been given to Brahma. Although Brahma was in Hindu philosophy no other than the One Supreme himself, and the one all-comprehensive object of adoration among the esoteric élite, his worship never formed any part of the popular programme. No temple or shrine of his exists to-day in India, nor has any existed for a thousand years past—a few very ancient and insignificant instances in remote parts being occasionally unearthed by archæologists. The fact that the One Supreme God himself is about the only object *not* provided for in Hindu worship would seem to lend itself to scathing satire. This, however, is disarmed by the reply that since Brahma as such is the infinite unconscious principle, devoid of attributes or qualities, he is therefore incapable of providing a tangible object of worship—not because he is below our esteem, but because he is above our comprehension. It is only as the conditioned that the Supreme can become manifest to our minds; and since Vishnu and Siva, the principles of continuity and change, are the most radical of these manifestations, they therefore form the first and most ultimate objects of feasible worship. Starting from Vedantic premises the answer is valid.

Mediæval Goddess-worship

A word about the goddesses of Hinduism, who are almost invariably represented as wives of the gods. The idea of a female principle in the divinity, though to our minds bizarre on account of its human associations, philosophically seems to express no more than

the principle of fecundity, or the *terminus a quo* of production. In fact "matter" in the Vedantic philosophy is nothing other than a sort of womb out of which the divine power produces the manifold of creation. It may be described as the divine substance regarded as impregnated by the divine activity, and affording a substratum for the multiplication of finite form (*cf. principium individuationis*). That the female principle is really identified with the male is shown from the fact that, nowadays at least, the wives of the gods are not supposed to be worshipped apart from, but rather in conjunction with their husbands, though the unreflecting masses may not always discriminate.

So far in the abstract. Practically, however, the idea of the female principle did at one time develop into a distinct cult—and one both professedly licentious and deeply superstitious—under the name of Saktism, or, from the writings which embody it, Tantrism. Curiously enough, the female was not regarded as the passive but as the active principle, so that Saktism (as implied by the name) was a worship of active force. It included at once the most debased use of magic, and the practice of promiscuous intercourse in the temple precincts. It is said that in the twelfth century A.D., Saktism was prevalent throughout India, though at the present time it seems to survive only in a few parts, of which Bengal is one. During that period Hindus were divided into "right-hand worshippers," who made the Puranas their real Veda, and were devoted in the ordinary way to Siva, Vishnu, Krishna, and their wives taken in practical identity with them, and "left-hand worshippers," who made the Tantras their real Veda, and worshipped the female counterpart of the deities (Durga, Radha, Sita, etc.) as separate goddesses presiding over the two operations of sexual intercourse and magic.

This corrupt state of things soon gave rise to several reforming sects, called after their founders the Nimbarkas, Madhvacaryas, Vallabhacaryas, Ramanujas,

Ramandas, and Chaitanyas, dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, and many others later—all of which worked for the betterment of religion in various parts of India, and, though now merged and forgotten as sects, seem to have succeeded in bringing Hinduism back from the lower abyss of degradation into which it had sunk, and leaving the less objectionable Puranism of the "right-hand worshippers" for the most part in possession down to this day.

It is to be remarked that Sivaism, which is characterized by its linga or phallus worship, was the source whence Saktism or Tantrism was developed. Yet this development was not an outcome of phallus-worship, but of the worship of female fecundity. Secondly, that linga-worship is not, as one might expect, licentious, but, on the contrary, rather austere. It is significant to note in this connection that in modern times, since Tantrism has practically disappeared, sanctified licentiousness is not attached to the worship of Siva and the linga, but to that of Vishnu, the god of divine grace and condescension, especially in connection with the worship of Krishna, who is supposed to derive sensuous pleasure from seeing the immodest caresses of his maharajas or priestly representatives on earth. These favours are regarded by the people of that sect, even married women, as the greatest honour and privilege they can receive. To what extent this immoral view prevails is unascertainable. It certainly cannot be imputed to Hindus in general, especially educated ones, and at most it exists only among the professedly Vishnuite section.

The Puranas

Modern Hinduism is undoubtedly much more comprehensive than the Puranas; but as it is so often called by that name, we ought to add just a word on those documents. The existing works are eighteen in number, of which the Vayu Matsya and Vishnu puranas are the oldest, dating possibly from the fourth

to the sixth century A.D. They are very miscellaneous in contents, and most of them probably composite, embodying much historical tradition, inextricably intermingled with legend and moral or theological teaching, as well as rules for ceremonies. Six (Rajasa) relate mainly to Brahma, six (Sattvika) to Vishnu, and six (Tamasa) to Siva. They seem all to have been compiled with a view of promoting some phase of Brahminical teaching, especially the trimurthi and the idea of incarnations or avatars. They came to be called "the Veda of the common people and of women," and form the staple religious reading of the ordinary Hindu who cares to read at all. Extracts from them are habitually recited or embodied in songs.

The almost total severance between the later Puranic and the earlier Vedic Hinduism has been sufficiently remarked as regards the objects of worship. Another difference is the introduction of images or idol worship in the later religion; the building of numberless temples, pilgrimages to famous shrines, the upgrowth of many fantastic rites, including bathing in sacred rivers for the instantaneous washing away of sins, etc. In addition should be mentioned the observance of signs and omens, and the magical use of incantations in connection with every important incident of daily life, and an elaborate code of caste and social ceremonies regarded as of vital importance and as integral to religion—so much so that it has been said that in India "caste is religion, and religion is caste." Among peculiarities which would specially strike a Christian, it should be mentioned that the essentials of worship are all strictly domestic. When (as on feast days) temples are visited, this is always individually, there being nothing in Hinduism analogous to collective public worship, or our system of preaching sermons or giving public instructions. The management of the domestic observances is in the hands of the family priest (always a Brahmin). The

children pick up the practices of their mothers without anything like a course of instruction on their meaning or on the fundamental truths of theological belief—although in the better educated families such instruction is said to form part of the domestic programme. But it is extremely difficult for the outsider to penetrate into the domestic workings of the Hindu religion.

Meaning of Idol-worship

As regards the use of idols or images, it is well to be on our guard against the somewhat naïve idea of "stock-and-stone worship" prevalent among many, viz. the notion that image worshippers really worship material objects, viewing them at the same time simply as such. Among students of comparative religion no such idea prevails. All writers I have seen are unanimous in understanding that image-worship (and even the grossest fetish) is *animistic* in its lower forms and *symbolic* or representative in its higher.[1] Where the concrete object is directly made an object of adoration, this is always because it is viewed not merely as the material thing which it appears, but because it is invisibly permeated or animated by the presence of spirit, of which it is merely the dwelling-place and vehicle; *cf.* the doctrines of consubstantiation and transubstantiation in the Blessed Eucharist. Hindus have their recognized ritual for inducing the presence of the god, and even of causing its cessation. At the beginning of the Ganpati feast the images, hitherto nothing but clay, are consecrated, and then worshipped as divine. At the close, the god is literally cast out by another ceremony, after which the images are thrown away, *e.g.*, into the sea. Apart from this, the presence of a god can be induced by the simple expedient of covering any suitable object with vermilion paint, a

[1] *Cf.* i. 4; xiii. 3, 16 note.

modern substitute for the original use of blood. In country parts the villagers will smear any fantastically-shaped boulder they find in the neighbourhood, and thereby set up what may in time become a permanent shrine. Most of the ancient monuments have been spoiled in this way by smudges of red paint placed on the sculptures, *e.g.* Elephanta, Ellora, Pandu Lena, etc.

The more educated, especially those under Western influences, adopt the higher or *symbolic* explanation, viz. that the image is merely a symbol of some attribute of the deity, or a representation of some legendary fact—to be venerated by association as Catholics venerate images, but not to be directly worshipped. Thus one Brahmin priest said, "The common people believe that the God is here, but *we* believe that God is *up there*." Another said, "We call this God and that God, for this is Siva and that is Vishnu. They are all Gods, and yet there is only one God." A third explained, "We adore not the image but the God in the image, because he dwells there." On asking them whether God was not everywhere present; and if so, why say that He dwells in this image? I managed, with a little help, to elicit the answer, "God is present everywhere, for He is everything and in everything. What we mean is only that He is *more operative* towards us in the image than apart from it." An educated layman told me that three-quarters of his fellow-countrymen believed in the real presence of the god in the image, and that the other quarter, who reduced it to a symbol merely, were not true Hindus. The educated Brahmin, however, with his esoteric philosophy, would probably not admit this latter aspersion.

The Mind of the People

Among the great mass of the people there is nothing like a reasoned belief. Even among the

educated, who will talk of the Sacred Books as the great charter of their religion, the Vedas are little read, if only because the knowledge of Sanskrit is so rare as to attract attention where found. Those interested in scientific theology are, it would seem, generally Vedanists; but opportunities of meeting men who show knowledge in this subject are few and far between. The general attitude is one of implicit and unreasoned practice of whatever the Brahmins tell them to do, and a blind following of ceremonial hereditary in the family. The least touch of Western education seems to act as a solvent even of this amount of orthodoxy; with the result that the men become totally indifferent, and leave the religious usages of the family to the women-sort. Intercourse with educated Hindus shows that they possess a great capacity for religious discussion, and generally a keen interest in listening to religious teaching; but the tolerance and sympathy thus shown rarely issues in any practical result. The Hindu mind is so imbued with the spirit of heredity that when he gives up the practice of his own religion he feels no disposition to embrace any other; he thinks that being born a Hindu, he must inevitably remain a Hindu, and a Hindu means in religion Hinduism or nothing. The result is that many at the present time absorb a large amount of Christian thought and feeling and appreciate its moral and mental value, but are no nearer the prospect of embracing Christianity as such than they were before hearing a word of it.

Chief Blots on Hinduism

The chief blots on the social-religious system of the Hindus—for "social" and "religious" among them are inseparable—are as follows:—

(1) The iron-bound system of caste, though useful in certain respects, stands in the way of all social expansion and development, and especially of any-

thing like racial or national unification. It places artificially a far wider gulf between pure Hindu and pure Hindu (otherwise equal in mental and social qualities) than nature itself seems to have placed between European and Asiatic, or between the white and the coloured man. On the other hand, the formal means by which one who has broken caste can secure recovery tend to expose the system itself to ridicule and contempt.

(2) The inability of the higher castes to touch food unless prepared by one of a caste equal to or superior to their own. An orthodox Hindu servant of high caste recently starved himself almost to death for five days on board ship from Calcutta to Madras, and had to be put on land and sent back by his master simply for this reason: a more incapacitating piece of ceremonialism could hardly be imagined, or a more dismal slavery to superstition. Apart from such emergencies, the system is an insuperable barrier to the intercourse required in modern times if social progress is to have place. Nothing brings home more clearly the unhuman effects of this system than the fact which I have personally experienced more than once, that a European pedestrian in the country, half-dying with thirst, may ask dozens of times for a "cup of cold water" in vain—even from those actually drawing water from a well. This comes not from any ill-nature or want of friendliness, but from a mortal dread of having their drinking-vessels defiled by the touch of a stranger.

(3) The practice of infant marriage, and, above all, the prohibition of those thus married in infancy to marry anyone else in case their tiny husband dies. These enforced widows are looked upon with the greatest contempt, and the usage is rife with evil consequences in the form of illicit intercourse and prostitution.

(4) The supreme emphasis laid on formal observances, not only for the securing of good-luck, but

also for the attainment of sanctity, forgiveness, and salvation—thus putting the importance of a virtuous life in the background, and robbing sin of its penalties by means of an extravagant and debased sacramentalism. One who bathes in the Ganges or the Godavery is made wholly clean, and he who dies at Benares goes straight to heaven, and so on.

(5) The mortal dread of misfortune if the ceremonial observances of religion are even for any excusable motive omitted. This dread of the penalties of omission is the great mainstay of Hindu practice, and the result is to rob it of all real religious value and reduce it to a mere policy of "saving one's skin."

(6) The total stoppage of the most important business enterprises at a critical moment simply because an unlucky omen has been observed. Only the other day a bargain in land was just on the point of being signed when the purchaser, looking at the plan, perceived that the plot was "tiger-shaped"—what we should call leg-of-mutton-shaped, more or less—and therefore bound to bring ill-luck. At no price whatever would the man entertain the purchase after that.[1]

(7) The supremacy of the Brahmin and the Jogi, involving as it does a cruel incubus on the people, and the encouragement of professional vagabondage and roguery. Mortal dread of the power of a Brahmin's curse drives people to do whatever is demanded of them, thus turning what might be charity into brutal compulsion. Moreover, this no doubt stands as a strong obstacle to the people entertaining the idea of any change of religion.

Other blots are of a more local character, and would be repudiated by the better kind of Hindus as outside the range of true orthodoxy. For instance, Thuggee, of course, or the religious sanctification of murder, now extinct; dacoity or highway-robbery similarly sanctified (both peculiar only to a few remote tribes);

[1] *Cf.* xiii. 23, 24.

Sati, or the burning of the widow beside the pyre of the husband (now made penal by English law, but occurring occasionally on the sly); the use of obscene language on certain festival occasions; prostitution in temples under the cloak of "espousal to the gods," etc.

More attractive Features

Of the more attractive points in Hinduism are the following:—

(1) The way in which religion permeates the whole life—in diametrical opposition to the idea that religion is a Sunday affair, or a separate department in which a small fraction of life must be given to God and the rest taken for ourselves.

(2) Beautiful traits of religious symbolism, sometimes underlying what to the outsider seem to be grotesque and monstrous forms. Thus a hideous idol often embodies a sublime thought, or at least is made the vehicle for it—according to Hunter, "the precious metal mingled with the dross."

(3) A deep and far-reaching family-spirit, which binds the members together throughout their lives, generation after generation—proving no doubt an intolerable nuisance at times, but certainly a powerful object-lesson to the West, where the spirit of family-life is so badly on the wane.[1]

(4) A tender regard for life and for the sufferings of the lower creation—which, regarded as a system, is not perhaps theologically sound. It probably rests on the belief in transmigration, according to which any particular plague-rat may be a man's ancestress. But it is nevertheless a beautiful feature in itself, and an eloquent set-off against all tendencies to recklessness and cruelty. It is curious, however, that this tenderness for life, and even the belief in the divinity of the cow, does not for a moment prevent a driver

[1] *Cf.* ii. 13; xiii. 9.

from habitually twisting his animal's tail till it becomes one long string of knotty disfigurements. This may sometimes be his only way of getting the beast to move, and so facts become too strong for faith; which perhaps may excuse the inconsistency. When it comes to pass that a Hindu will rather let himself be bitten into a piebald condition than lift his hand to kill a flea, it seems going a little too far.

(5) Almsgiving as a regular habit of life, not only to strolling Jogis but also to all and sundry beggars. A well-to-do Hindu carries a pocketful of small copper coins ready for all applicants. He never rebuffs a beggar rudely, or refuses him an alms until his pocket is empty, and then politely indicates the fact by a sign, which is always respectfully accepted as final. The literal teaching of the Gospel on the one hand, and the economic, social, and moral objections to indiscriminate almsgiving on the other, here begin to loom strong on the horizon. So we must confine ourselves to remarking on the beauty of the trait, whatever criticism may be involved.

(6) A certain stability in the social order, and a certain habitual discipline borne in upon the individual, through the rules of caste. The existence of caste has hitherto made the Hindu an easy people to govern, and its breaking down is opening the way to a perilous unsettlement and unrest.

Relations to Christianity

(1) Down to quite recent times the influence of Christianity on Hindu thought and worship may be safely regarded as *nil*, with the exception of the later aspects of Krishna-worship. An attempt has been made to show that the portrayal of Krishna as a baby-god, which occurs as a late development, is a conscious imitation of the child Jesus; and the spiritual doctrine of personal devotion and renuncia-

tion, or of giving oneself over to the divinity by faith and self-abandonment (embodied in the Bagavad Gita), is also probably the outcome of Christian influence. The Brahmo and Arya Samajs, instituted for the purification of popular Hinduism, though professedly returning to the purity of the Vedic religion, show themselves imbued with an ethos borrowed from non-Catholic Christianity. At the present day educated Hindus, including Brahmins, show a marked tendency to explain matters in Christian terminology and in analogy with Christian belief and practice. They do not, as a rule, acknowledge indebtedness, but endeavour rather, by searching their own books or by free allegorizing, to show that Hinduism already contains everything, and needs no help from outside sources.

(2) The antagonism between Christianity and intellectual Hinduism is most marked.

Vedantic Hinduism	Christian Theism
(1) God, as He is in Himself, absolutely unknowable and incapable of definite attributions.	(1) God, as He is in Himself, knowable correctly though inadequately under definite attributions.
(2) The universe an emanation of the divine substance, unreal and delusive when viewed as distinct from the divine substance.	(2) The universe a creation of the divine power, real, and substantially distinct from the divine substance.
(3) The universe eternal before and after, and in a state of unending cyclic flux.	(3) The universe finite, with a beginning in time, and not (at least of necessity) to last for ever.
(4) Spirit, soul, and body, all three distinct, and yet all in different ways identical in essence with the One and the All.	(4) Spirit and soul identical, but neither soul nor body identical in essence with the One or the All, but only "according to his image and likeness."
(5) The spirit in each individual man identically the one same infinite spirit pervading all.	(5) The spirit in each individual man a self-contained entity, separately created by God.

Vedantic Hinduism	Christian Theism
(6) An eternal series of lives (by transmigration) brought to an end only by achieving a conscious identification of self with the Supreme.	(6) One life only, followed after death by perseverance of individual existence — capable of moral union with, but not physical absorption into, the Supreme.
(7) Probation continued indefinitely until a man has attained absolute perfection. No finality of the state of punishment.	(7) Probation closed absolutely at the end of this one life, and followed by eternal fixity either in heaven or in hell.
(8) The inexorable reign of karma, or the causality of actions; the effects of evil actions being cancelled only by equivalent good actions—a system of rigid causality involving the denial of anything like mercy, forgiveness, vicarious atonement or redemption.	(8) Causality of actions of secondary import; moral effect all-important, viz. outrage of the divine law. Effects of evil actions cancelled by repentance and by gratuitous forgiveness through the mercy of God, and this on a basis of vicarious atonement.
(9) The consequent negation of moral and personal relations between God and man. In God no such attribute as holiness, love, freedom of will, providence, retributive judgement, or the prerogatives of Creator, Lord, Master, Redeemer, etc.	(9) The consequent belief in personal and moral relations between God and man. In God there are the attributes of holiness, love, freedom of will, providence, retributive judgement, and the prerogatives of Creator, Lord, Master, Redeemer, etc.
(10) No idea of personal service, sanctification and salvation being self-centred and autonomous. Each man at once master and slave of his own karma; no real fear, loyalty, gratitude or love to God, and no proper idea of the meaning of sin.	(10) Personal service the very essence of religion; sanctification and salvation the work of God, requiring only the co-operation of man. Hence the spirit of loyalty, gratitude, and love to God, and an intense realization of the proper meaning of sin.

The radical antagonism is therefore strongest in Vedantic Hinduism. The more theistic philosophies obliterate some but substitute other points of difference; *e.g.* the Nyaya system, which, while representing God as eternal and personal, regards souls as also eternal and independent of Him; and

similarly with the Vaiseshika system, which is developed on atomistic lines. But it is the Vedanta which prevails most widely among those who cultivate speculative theology at all.

(3) Strange to say, with all its aberrations in the way of superstition, popular Hinduism is not so radically opposed to Christianity as is the philosophical. The mass of Hindus, even if tinged with pantheistic ideas, do practically regard God as a personal being with attributes, and by them religion is viewed as service. They believe in the divine governance of the world, though in a way sadly degraded to a kind of fatalism. They seem to have a notion of the divine mercy and forgiveness, though again debased into a hideous sacramentalism, more or less independent of repentance and a virtuous life. The use of images and of symbolical ceremonies would be theoretically unobjectionable, at least from the Catholic point of view, were it not centred round objects both mythical and unworthy of the Divine Being, and associated with astrology and magic. The radical antagonism between the popular religion and Christianity lies rather in these main points: (1) The idea of heredity (Hindu by birth = Hindu by religion). (2) Hence no notion of truth as a criterion of religion, or of rational inquiry into the truth of religion on a basis of historical fact. (3) The identification of religion with caste, so that no Hindu can change his religion, even on conviction, without being penalized as an outcaste; and, of course (4) the mythology, superstition, magic and fatalism which run through the system.

Hints on Interpretation

Finally, I deem it necessary to warn Europeans approaching Hinduism against certain prejudices which tend to putting the worst instead of the best interpretation on things read or seen—thus making Hinduism in many respects appear far otherwise than

a more intimate knowledge shows it to be. These prejudices arise partly from pure and simple preconceptions, based no doubt on an appreciation of the excellence of Christianity and the inferiority of paganism, etc. But they arise also from the totally different constitution of the Eastern as compared with the Western mind. The Western temperament is primarily matter-of-fact, or, if you like, historical and scientific; while the Eastern temperament is primarily romantic, poetic, and artistic. Whereas in so vital a matter as religion our first query would be, "Is it a fact?", the oriental mind, left to itself, would hardly ever dream of asking such a question. Instead of the fact, he always looks to the idea; and the acceptability of the idea is his criterion of assent. To him it is a matter of supreme indifference whether Vishnu ever made his nine "descents" in history or not. Enough if the idea is there as part of his traditional inheritance and edifies his mind. He would be just as ready to worship Christ as he is to worship Krishna, if only Christ were presented to him in an acceptable light and embodied for him in his code. Moreover, the power of the Hindu to work in symbols is enough to amaze the Western spectator. He will tell you how a certain god—I forget his name, but he is represented in scores of rustic shrines under the form of a shapeless trunk without arms or legs or nose, but with two eyes of porcelain glaring monstrously out of a pudding-face where the breast ought to be—how this god lost his limbs through nameless diseases contracted by a licentious life; and will then go on to explain it to mean the divinity labouring and suffering out of love for mankind! The instance is an extreme one, but illustrates my point—viz. that the various grotesquenesses of the Hindu religious apparatus must not be judged altogether by their surface appearance or literal sense, but by the sometimes far-fetched but sometimes apt and beautiful imagery which may underlie it in the worshipper's mind.

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THE RELIGION OF BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA

From the French of

A. CONDAMIN, S.J.

I. SOURCES

SIXTY years ago, Babylonian and Assyrian religion was known to us only through the meagre information and allusions furnished by the Bible and profane authors and, in particular, by a few fragments of the writings of Berosus, a priest of the temple of Bel at Babylon about 275 B.C. Research in Assyria and Babylonia has, since 1842, excavated the ruins of the ancient towns Nineveh, Asshûr, Babylon, Nippur, Lagash, unearthed temples and palaces, and brought to light a mass of texts, in cuneiform script, of every epoch from the fourth millennium to the last centuries before our era. Historical and votive inscriptions, annals and records of the kings, collections of religious documents, rituals, incantations, hymns, litanies, prayers of various sorts, long lists containing names of divinities and of temples, epics, myths, legends, astrological texts, the correspondence of officials and private persons,—this immense literature is a rich mine of information about the religion of Babylon and Assyria; the bulk of it is contained in the 20,000 tablets which belonged to the library of Asshûrbanipal, and are to-day in the British Museum.

But, to avoid rash generalizations and hasty comparisons in the History of Religions, it is of prime

importance to note, at the outset, that our knowledge of Assyro-Babylonian religion is, in many points, *incomplete* and *provisional.* A small part only of the texts buried beneath the sands of the Tigris and Euphrates plains has as yet been discovered; and even of those stored in museums, a mere fraction has been published: and of this not all has seriously been studied. This is a motive for prudence, and for taking several conclusions as provisory and for no more than they are worth. Alongside of these considerable lacunæ in our information, many obscure questions, especially concerning origins, remain even where we possess the evidence. For instance, are we, with a few specialists, to regard the *Semites* as the inventors of Babylonian civilization, or, with the majority, a non-Semitic race, termed *Sumerian*? "Sumerian" texts are found in fairly large numbers by the side of those written in Semitic (Assyrian or Babylonian) dialects: they suggest grave problems, in view of which the true expert instinctively inclines to prudence and to modesty.

II. The Babylonian and Assyrian Pantheon. Polytheism or Monotheism? The Name of Yahweh

A few authors, especially Professor A. H. Sayce of Oxford, working as far back as possible towards the source of Babylonian religion, and striving to disentangle Sumerian from Semitic elements, mistakenly reduce Sumerian religion to *Animism* or the cult of spirits.[1] According to others, Babylonian religion was at first purely *astral* in character. F. X. Kugler, S.J., astronomer and Assyriologist, has refuted the main arguments by which Winckler and A. Jeremias support this theory.

Babylon was not, in those distant ages, a united

[1] *Cf.* Lect. I., p. 4.

and homogeneous kingdom; it was divided into "a number of little independent states formed by each several city. Each of these cities was consecrated to a god, who was regarded as its real sovereign, and in whose name a king or *patesi* ruled. Certain sanctuaries enjoyed a peculiar celebrity: in the south, those of En-ki (later known as Ea) at Eridu, of Nannar (Sin) at Ur, of Babbar (Shamash) at Larsa, of Anu and Innina (Ishtar) at Uruk, of En-lil (Bel) at Nippur; in the north, the shrines of Shamash at Sippar, of Nergal at Kutha," etc. (F. Thureau Dangin). And another Assyriologist describes for us the Pantheon of this early epoch as follows:—

> In the most literal sense of the phrase the Babylonian may be said to have formed his gods in his own image. . . . Even in the early periods of Sumerian history the city-god was merely an enlarged reflection of the patesi, or human ruler of the city, who was his representative and counterpart. . . . A large company of gods were members of his household and ministered to his wants or served him as officers of state. Thus it was the privilege of special deities to act as his cup-bearer, the keeper of his harîm, or the driver of his chariot; others were musicians and singers; others again were shepherds, land stewards, architects, or inspectors of fishing and irrigation; while more important deities were his counsellors of state, or the generals who planned his campaigns and looked to the defence of his city. When it is recalled that even in the earliest historical periods many other deities were worshipped in most of the cities in addition to the city-god, and that each of these had his own household and divine attendants, one reason will be apparent for the large number of gods whose names were known to the later Babylonians and Assyrians, even if their origin and functions were often obscure.[1]

In the course of centuries larger states were formed, and several divinities, possessing some unusual similarity of character or attribute, were fused into a single god. The importance of a god depended largely on that of the town whose special patron he was. The chief god of the city which had acquired

[1] L. W. King, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, etc., in the British Museum*, part xxiv., 1908, p. 5.

suzerainty over others became supreme god of the kingdom. Thus, in the time of Hammurabi (almost certainly the Amraphel of *Genesis* xiv.), about 2000 B.C., Mardûk, god of Babylon, became principal god of the kingdom. This would not prevent a host of secondary gods existing at his side. The names of these are mainly preserved in incantations, which were prayers considered efficacious in proportion as they invoked a greater number of gods: the series entitled *Shurpu* names about 150.

Little by little groups and theological systems were formed. Several divinities were interconnected; the rôle and relations of each became defined. At the head of the Pantheon we find grouped ANU, god of the sky; EN-LIL, god of the earth; and EA, god of the ocean. By the side of these three great gods, an important place is held by the goddess ISHTAR; she is called *Nin-makh, i.e.* "Great Lady," "and is generally added as a fourth member of the triad after Ea." This fact "is sufficient to show that we are dealing here, not with the associate of a male deity, but with some more general principle recognized by the priests at least as a factor in the workings and divisions of the universe . . . . the life-producing power manifested in the world, without which heaven, earth, and water would be a desolate waste" (Morris Jastrow, jr.). Many goddesses of this nature, endowed at first with distinct and independent cults, as female principles of fecundity and life, or, again, with violent and warlike characteristics, ended by gradually fusing with Ishtar, who already appears at Babylon especially as goddess of life and vegetation, and in Assyria as goddess of war. At Uruk (Erech) "priestesses and voluntary eunuchs served the goddess. According to the great Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, the plot of which centres, in fact, at Uruk, her town, she has no legitimate spouse, but picks her lovers at her good pleasure" (F. Jeremias).

Most of the other goddesses, spouses of various gods, have but a colourless rôle, and are practically but the "doublet" of the male divinity with whom they are associated. SIN is the Moon-god, with famous temples in the towns of Ur and Haran. He is one of the most powerful gods of the Babylonian Pantheon. He is called "Prince of the Gods of Heaven and Earth." Beside him stands the Sun-god SHAMASH, honoured with a special cult at Sippar in Northern, and Larsa in Southern Babylonia. NINIB, War-god and patron of Agriculture, is another solar divinity, as is NERGAL, god of War, Pestilence, and Destruction, originally worshipped at Kutha. ADAD (called also in Assyria RAMMAN) is a Storm-god. When, under Hammurabi, Babylon became, for nearly 2000 years, the religious centre of all Babylonia, MARDUK, its god, was elevated by the priests to the supreme rank; in the Creation-poem he is proclaimed Lord of Heaven and Earth, Master of the destiny of Gods and Men. Henceforward NEBO (or Nabu), the god of Borsippa (a town older, perhaps, than Babylon itself) becomes the "well-beloved son of Marduk"; he is god of Wisdom and Science, of Writing, Incantations, and Oracles, the special patron of priests.

DUMUZI or TAMMUZ (the *Adonis* of Phœnicia and Greece) is not one of the more important gods, but his cult and legend are famous. He is God of Vegetation and Spring; he perishes each year, devoured by the blazing summer sun, in the month which bears his own name, Tammuz. He is the lover of Ishtar, and when he descends into the lower world, Ishtar follows him to snatch her beloved from death: this is the subject of the poem *The Descent of Ishtar into Hell*.[1]

[1] It would be idle here to catalogue the secondary divinities: Nindara, Galalim, Lugalbanda, Mami, Zamama, etc.; the very pronunciation of their names is not always sure. The gods were grouped in two main categories, according as they were celestial or terrestrial; they were called the Igigi and the Anunnaki respectively.

Assyria borrowed her religious ideas and divinities from Babylon. She possesses of her own only the national god Asshûr: he occupies a sublime and solitary position, and has neither father, spouse, nor son. *Ishtar* is often invoked as "Ishtar of Nineveh or Arbeles," the two Assyrian towns where she had her chief sanctuaries.

Many authors have asserted that, by the time of Hammurabi (about 2000 B.C.), Babylonia had reached a certain monotheism.[1] Proper names of persons, dating from this period, are found compounded with the name of God (*ilu*), thus: *Ilu-ittia*, "God with me"; *Ilu-abi*, "God is my Father"; *Avêl-ilu*, "Servant of God," etc. So, too, in the code of Hammurabi, discovered (Dec. 1901 to Jan. 1902) and deciphered by Fr. V. Scheil, O.P., it is frequently laid down that the guilty or accused person be brought "before God," without a name of any particular deity being added. Must we not then conclude that the Babylonians were thinking of a supreme god, unique perhaps, the Only True God? No: that is not at all what the examples we have quoted, or any analogous to them, prove; for we can —and most probably ought to—translate, "*a god* is with me," "*a god* is my father," etc.; or, better still, "*the god*," i.e. *the god I invoke, the principal protector of town, family, or individual.* This is the opinion of an expert who has made a special study of personal proper names of Hammurabi's time.[2] We may here repeat what Professor Flinders Petrie said at the late Congress for the History of Religions at Oxford, upon the religion of ancient Egypt: "The god under whom a man was born and lived, was *the* god to him; and equally it was right in his view for everyone born under other gods to worship them. The

[1] *Cf.* Lect. VIII., p. 13; XVII., p. 6.

[2] Hermann Ranke, *Early Babylonian Proper Names, Hammurabi Dynasty*, 1905, p. 214, n. 3.

common references to 'god' or the 'great god' in religious inscriptions mean naturally the god of the place."[1]

An often quoted text, much relied upon by those fain to indicate monotheistic tendencies and currents in Babylonian religion, is the following; it probably dates from the late Babylonian epoch (about the sixth century B.C.):

Tu (?)	is Marduk (as God) of Planting.
Lagal-a-ki [..]	is Marduk (as God) of the Deep.
Ninib	is Marduk (as God) of Strength.
Nergal	is Marduk (as God) of War.
Zamama	is Marduk (as God) of Battle.
Enlil	is Marduk (as God) of Rule and Government.
Nabû	is Marduk (as God) of Wealth.
Sin	is Marduk as Illuminator of the Night.
Shamash	is Marduk (as God) of Justice.
Adad	is Marduk (as God) of Rain.

(Translation by L. W. King)

But analogous lists similarly identify various divinities with Ea, Bel, Ninib, or Nergal, etc. This suggests a tendency in the various religious centres to simplify the Pantheon, to refer everything to the chief god, to exalt Marduk, Ea, etc., above the other gods, regarding each of these as possessing or reflecting one or the other of his attributes. Besides, we are not exactly sure of the meaning of these speculations: many Assyriologists refuse to see in them an expression of any genuine monotheistic notion. And rightly, for these formulæ are far from the true monotheism which proclaims one only God, and regards *all other gods as nothing*. To the very end the kings of Babylon and of Nineveh in their inscriptions invoked gods and goddesses. So too private persons in their correspondence name as their protectors Asshur, Belit, Sin, Shamash, Adad, Marduk, Zarpanitum, Nabu, Tashmetum, Ishtar,

[1] *Transactions of the Third International Congress, etc.*, i., 1908, p. 188.

Ninib, Nergal, Laz, etc., the great gods of heaven and earth and the guardian gods of the country. We must then conclude, with the best Assyriologists and historians of religions, that if Babylon and Assyria did indeed move towards monotheism, they never took the final step, and to the end maintained a monarchical polytheism. Partisans of natural evolution must, therefore, confess that monotheism was never reached by Babylon and Assyria in a religious history of more than 3000 years; it would be but good logic to recognize the transcendental character of the monotheistic religion of Israel.

It has often been asserted, in the last few years, that the name of *Yahweh* was known to the Babylonians long before the time of Moses.[1] Mr. R. W. Rogers, for instance, writes as follows: "Here, then, is the name Jahweh in use among the Babylonians, at the Hammurabi period, two thousand years before Christ. . . . There can therefore be no escape from the conclusion that the divine name Jahweh is not a peculiar possession of the Hebrews."[2] Still he recognizes that the idea of the Divinity is incomparably higher among the Israelites: "Jahweh himself is not taken away. He remains the priceless possession, the chief glory of Israel. It is only the *name* that is shown to be widespread. And the *name* matters little. . . . Into that vessel a long line of prophets, from Moses onward, poured such a flood of attributes as never a priest in all Western Asia, from Babylonia to the Sea, ever dreamed of in his highest moments of spiritual insight. In this name, and through Israel's history, God chose to reveal Himself to Israel and by Israel to the world. Therein lies the supreme and lonesome superiority of Israel over Babylonia."[3]

[1] *Cf.* Lect. XVII., p. 12.

[2] *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, especially in its Relations to Israel*, 1908, pp. 93, 95.

[3] *Ib.* p. 9. These pages on the name of Yahweh were quoted entire in the *Expository Times*, April 1909, pp. 316–319.

The presence of the actual name Yahweh in the Babylonian documents, where it is believed to have been found, is very problematical. It may be maintained with many learned Assyriologists, *cf.* Lehmann, Zimmern, Bezold, Hilprecht, Ranke, Daiches, that it is not as yet even proved probable. Still less likely is the identification of Aḫi-iami with Aḫi-Yawi (with the name Yahweh as the second part of this proper name). Aḫi-iami is a personal name read on a cuneiform tablet of the fifteenth century B.C., excavated at Tell Ta'annek in Palestine. The conjecture *Aḫi-Yawi*, from which conclusions as to the ancient religion of Canaan were already being drawn, was generally and almost immediately abandoned.

III. Cosmogony

The great Babylonian epic on the *Creation*[1] is divided into seven tablets each containing about 140 lines. Most of it is preserved, but the last three tablets are mutilated and contain considerable lacunæ. It begins thus:

> When in the height heaven was not named,
> And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name,
> And the primeval Apsū, who begat them,
> And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both,—
> Their waters were mingled together,
> And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen;
> When of the gods none had been called into being,
> And none bore a name, and no destinies [were ordained];
> Then were created the gods in the midst of [heaven]. . . .
>
> (Mr. L. W. King's translation.)

Aṗsū (Ocean) and Tiamat (Sea), who mingle their waters, are Chaos: they produce the gods, *i.e.* Order emerging from Chaos. Soon Apsū complains of the gods, whose activity disturbes his repose: 'By day I cannot rest, by night I cannot lie down.' He consults Tiamat, and together they resolve to destroy the gods. Tiamat gives birth to serpents, dragons,

[1] *Cf.* Lect. VII., p. 31; VIII., p. 4.

monsters of all sorts, which she hurls against the gods. The god Anu is sent to do battle with her: but at the mere sight of Tiamat he flies in terror. Marduk consents to undertake the fight, on condition, though, of being exalted in the assembly of the gods. The gods accordingly meet at a great banquet, and, in their cups, bestow the omnipotence on Marduk. He arms for the fray:

The bow and the quiver he hung at his side.
He set the lightning in front of him,
With burning flame he filled his body.
He made a net to enclose the inward parts of Tiamat,
(or, to enclose Tiamat therein)
The four winds he stationed so that nothing of her might escape. . . .

Thus equipped, riding on a hurricane for chariot, Marduk advances boldly against Tiamat. Directly that monster opens her jaws, he hurls a tempestuous wind between them, and pierces her body with an arrow. He divides the body, and with half he covers heaven; to support the waters aloft, he shoots a bolt and instals a sentinel. Thus is formed a sort of firmament containing the upper waters. Marduk proceeds to set in the sky stars, planets, moon, and sun: the moon he establishes to regulate time. In the remaining fragments of the last tablet, Marduk is seen forming man out of blood—perhaps, according to several authorities, his own blood. The poem ends with the glorification of Marduk by gods and men. Bel gives him his own name of Lord of the World, and 50 titles are bestowed on him for the proclamation of his attributes.

The evident purpose of this poem is to elevate Marduk, god of Babylon, above all other gods The poem dates from the period when that city rose to the first rank, about 2000 B.C., but the fundamental notion of the poem, the traditions which it makes use of, are presumably far more ancient than this. In other places it is the god Ea who is represented as creator of mankind.

Many writers have insisted on the similarity of this story to that of the Hebrew Genesis. But the dissimilarities are yet more striking, and they are essential and profound. In the mythic poem, the gods are *born* when they emerge from chaos: their life is threatened by the very principle which gave them

birth; they engage in a struggle which might have ended in their destruction.

Anu basely flies before the enemy. The gods get drunk and noisy. The "omnipotence" of Marduk seems doubtful enough in view of his way of acquiring it, of the magic proofs he gives of it, of the odd armour he is obliged to don in order to fight Tiamat; in fact, the whole scene is grotesque. In the Bible, however, instead of this coarse polytheism, we find a pure monotheism. A unique God acts from the outset as absolute master, with genuine omnipotence. He has no need to embark on a perilous conflict with hostile forces; with a single word he creates and organizes all. The spirituality of the ideas, the dignity of the tone, the majesty of the picture, exalt this first page of Genesis incomparably above the Babylonian legend and all the cosmogonies of antiquity.

In the Flood episode (tablet 11 of the Gilgamesh epic) the similarities with the Bible narrative are, in a number of details, far more striking; but here, too, the gods cut a sorry figure:

> The gods were afraid of the Flood:
> They withdrew and ascended the heaven of Anu;
> The gods, like dogs with drooping ears, crouched behind the barrier . . . .
> The gods smelt the smell of the sacrifice,
> The gods smelt the pleasant smell;
> The gods gathered like flies above the sacrificer.
>
> (Lines 114–116, 160–162.)

The poem does not make the motive of the deluge plain: the gods dispute about it. En-lil is indignant on beholding that everyone has not perished. Ishtar plays a ridiculous rôle: she had decided on the destruction of humanity, and yet deplores the spectacle of mankind's death by drowning. In the Bible, the Flood is a *punishment* of *corrupt* humanity: the righteous Noe is spared.

IV. Magic, Witchcraft, Incantations

Sickness and disasters were not regarded as effects of merely natural causes, but as punishments for offences against a god and were attributed to maleficent demons. Wizards, and especially witches, were very powerful in drawing down these evils upon men. They can confound nature, change the destinies of men, influence the decisions of the great gods, impress a whole army of evil genii against a miserable mortal. Charms, magic potions, mysterious operations, or simply the "evil eye," the whispering of a few ill-omened words, suffice to effect these prodigies. Against this malevolent power exorcist-priests fought by means of incantations. They strove to break the spell, either by turning it back upon the sorceress, or driving out the evil demon by a categorical command —"Go hence!"—or, finally, by addressing prayers to the gods, especially those of Light and Fire. They enumerate the various sins of which the afflicted person may have been guilty, and, next, the different ways of falling under a spell:

Be the spell broken, whatever it be . . . .
Whether through his father's image he be bewitched,
Or through the image of his elder brother or elder sister he be bewitched,
Whether he have encountered a man bewitched,
Or have slept in the bed of a man bewitched,
Or have sat in the chair of a man bewitched,
Or have eaten in the plate of a man bewitched,
Or have drunk in the cup of a man bewitched.

[To conjure the spell, the object by which it has been transmitted must be discovered.]

He hunts, he hunts! He hunts in the bed,
He hunts in the chair, He hunts in the dish,
He hunts in the lamp, He hunts in the bellows,
He hunts in the tablet and the writing-reed . . . .
He hunts at the going out and the coming in of the city,
He hunts at the exit and at the entering in of the house.[1]

[1] H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion*, 2nd tablet, "Shurpu."

Various series of documents of this sort have been published, showing how large a place witchcraft and conjuration held at Babylon. It is vividly described in the 47th chapter of Isaias. The prophet says to Babylon:

> . . . . An evil shall come upon thee,
> thou shalt not know how to charm it away . . .
> Keep then thine enchantments
> and the multitude of thy sorceries,
> wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth up!
> They perchance shall be of avail for thee;
> they perchance shall make thee terrible.

V. Divination and Oracle

The prophet Ezechiel, who, in his exile at Babylon, is a first-hand authority, writes as follows:—"The king of Babylon stands at the parting of the two ways to use divination (in order, *scl.*, to decide in which direction to make his expedition): he shakes the arrows; he consults his household gods; he examines the liver."[1] *Extispicium, i.e.* the examination of the liver and entrails of animals, was, in fact, an ordinary method of divination.[2] The bârû or diviner-priest practised also cup-divination. Oil was poured into a cup of water, or, *vice versa*, water into oil: the divination was based on the behaviour of the oil, its movement up and down, to right or left. Other prognostications were drawn from the flight of birds, births, or certain abnormal or monstrous phenomena. An oracle tells us that if a sow gives birth to offspring with eight legs and two tails, the king will see his power increase. Above all, the future was told from the movements of the stars and atmospheric phenomena. A number of astrological observations and answers have come down to us, and we can test the accuracy of the passage where the ruin of Babylon

[1] Ezech. 21^{21}.
[2] *Cf.* Lect. XIII., pp. 23, 24.

is foretold, while the prophet announces that the astrologers, far from saving her, shall perish with her.[1]

> With so much observing art thou wearied?
> Let them arise, then, let them save thee,
> They that make the chart of the heavens,
> and that observe the stars,
> And tell unto thee each month
> whence the things that are to be shall come!

The custom of consulting the gods and receiving their oracles witnesses to the belief of the ancients in a Providence who governs the world, knows future events and the resolutions of human wills, hears prayer, and is willing in certain circumstances to reveal His designs. But here too is an essential and fundamental difference between these oracles and the prophecies, containing the true revelations, with which God deigned to favour Israel, His elect.[2] Even in their form, in spite of their similarities, the simplicity of the Bible phrases cannot but be contrasted with the prolix and complicated consultations of the Babylonian priests, who enumerate all possible cases, and multiply synonyms, for fear the god may misunderstand, or rather, lest he elude the question, or give but an evasive answer. Here is an example of an oracle:

> O Shamash, great Lord, to my demand, in thy faithful favour, deign to answer. Between this day, the 3rd day of this month, of the month of Arû, until the 11th day of the month of Abû of this year, within these 100 days and these 100 nights, a space of time fixed (as limit) for the oracle of the bârû; within this fixed space of time will Kashtariti with his troops, or the troops of the Cimmerians, or the troops of the Medes, or the troops of the Manneans, or all other enemy, succeed in their designs? By assault, by force, by arms and battle, by breach, mine, or battering ram, by starvation, by the names of the god and the goddess, by parley and amicable conference, or by any other method or stratagem of siege, shall they take the town of

[1] Isa. 47^{13}.

[2] "What prerogative, then, is the Jew's? . . . . Much every way. First, that to them were entrusted the oracles of God" (Rom. $3^{1, 2}$).

Kishassu? shall they enter the walls of this town of Kishassu? shall they seize this town of Kishassu? shall it fall into their hands? Thy great godhead knoweth it. Is the taking of this town of Kishassu, by whatsoever enemy it be, from this day unto the (last) day appointed, ordained and decreed by the order and mandate of thy great godhead, O Shamash, great Lord? Shall we see it? Shall we hear of it? etc.[1]

Most oracles are cast in poetical form, and their poetry is often remarkable.

ORACLE TO ESARHADDON (681–668 B.C.)

I will deliver the Gimarrai into his hands,
I will cast irons upon the country of Ellipi!
Asshur shall give him the four corners of the earth,
He shall arise from his house, He shall increase his house!
There is no king like him: He shall shine like the rising sun.
Behold, the Ḫarḫareans Fall on thee, attack thee,
Assail thee! But thou openest Thy mouth: "Have mercy, Asshur!"
And I have heard thy cry, And from the gate of heaven
I cover them with shame! In the pyre I decimate them;
Thou, thou holdest their fortress. I make them rise before thee,
And fly unto the mountains. I rain stones of disaster upon them!
I break thine enemies. With their blood I fill the river!
Let them see! Let them be cast down to the ground!
As Asshur, Master of the Gods, I shall overthrow them.
This is the favourable oracle found before the statue.
This tablet of the wills of Asshur Is carried on . . . . before the king.
It is anointed with good oil, Victims are sacrificed thereto.
With perfumes is it perfumed, It is read to the king.

(From F. Scheil's translation.)

Possibly the oracles were often vague and inspired but little confidence; witness the following

[1] J. A. Knudtzon, *Assyrische Gebete an den Sonnengott . . . aus der Zeit Asarhaddons u. Asurbanipals*, 1893, no. 1. These cunningly varied formulæ naturally make us think of the words of the gospel: "they think that in their much speaking they shall be heard" (Matt. 6[7]).

message sent to King Esarhaddon by the goddess Ishtar:

> The former word
> That I spake unto thee,
> Thou hadst no confidence therein.
> Lo, now!
> In the last words
> Have thou confidence!

Professor Morris Jastrow here observes: "Clearly, the Assyrian kings believed that the oracles existed to announce what they wanted to hear; they probably did not hesitate to follow their own judgement whenever they considered it superior to the advice given to them by the gods."

VI. Hymns and Prayers

The Babylonians and Assyrians felt profoundly their dependence from the Divinity; they were essentially religious. To start with, their own names bear witness to their feelings: their names reveal sentiments of confidence, gratitude, and respect for some one or other attribute of the Divinity, or again, a prayer, a benediction: they signify, for instance, *Marduk has given a son; Sin has multiplied the brothers; Sin has heard; Sin has accepted my homage; My master has heard me; Son of Sin; Son of Ishtar; Son of his God; Servant of Ea; Handmaid of Shamash; Asshur is my strength; Adad is my help; Bel is good; Shamash is King; Who is like to Asshur? I shall behold the face of Bel; Turn thee to Shamash!* These names are found in historical documents or contracts, at the end of copies of religious texts usually signed by the copier; several thousands of these names are known, and they furnish evidence of high utility for the appreciation of religion.[1]

[1] Of great value, again, are the names of temples, which reveal the point of view from which the god and his sanctuary were considered. Mr. B. D. Luckenbill has recently drawn up a list of over 300

In the opinion of Mr. Stephen Langdon, who has just published an important hymn-book of the official religion of Babylonia and Assyria:

"Religious literature in Babylonia originated from two distinct sources; on the one hand, the priest of incantation exercised the mystic rites of magic over afflicted persons in huts in the fields; on the other hand the psalmists had charge of the public services of the temples . . . ."[1] And elsewhere the same author writes: "The entire history of Sumerian and Babylonian religion, extending over a period of three thousand years, contains in the public services a dominant note of penance and fear of the gods. Religion is primarily a social expression of humanity, and it is the expression of their helplessness and their sinfulness. This does not imply that the Babylonian view of life was pessimistic. . . . Yet, after all, their public liturgies and psalms leave upon us, as they must have left upon them, an impression of indefinable longing to be more pure."[2]

Here is the beginning of an ancient elegy to Enlil (Mr. Langdon's translation):

Oh Enlil councillor,	doth anyone comprehend thy form?
The strength begifted,	lord of the harvest lands.
He was created in the mountains,	lord of the grain fields.
Warrior who possesses great strength,	father Enlil.
Thou art the powerful prince of the gods,	for creating posterity thou sustainest life.
As the air thou art all-pervading,	as the grain thou . . . .
The haughty,	the hostile land thou dost humiliate.
The proud,	the wicked highlands thou dost humiliate . . . .
. . . . The wrath of thy heart,	can anyone appease it?
The utterance of thy mouth	brings destruction.
With thee who ventureth to make war?	

Stately, too, is this hymn to Asshûr (from the

Babylonian and Assyrian temple names (see *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, July 1908).

[1] *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, Stephen Langdon, Paris, 1909, p. vii.

[2] *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions*, Oxford, 1908, i. p. 249.

French translation of Fr. Scheil), with its solemn repetitions:

The immense, the prince of the gods,	the omniscient,
the superb, transcendent, master of the gods	who fixeth destinies,
Asshûr, immense Lord,	the omniscient,
the superb, transcendent, master of the gods	who fixeth destinies . . . .
[I would praise] his greatness,	his glory would I declare,
make his name to shine,	magnify his title, ...
I would sing [his greatness]	I would declare his glory . . . .
To the admiration of the peoples	I would reveal him openly ;
I will sing his knowledge	for the days to come,
For ever and ever	I will celebrate his priesthood !
The wise one of great understanding,	arbiter of the gods, the glorified,
Creator of [the world above]	author of the dwellings (?),
Son of [Anu]	father of Ishtar,
Mighty heart,	subtle intelligence,
. . . . the resplendent	his word is obeyed ;
. . . . Asshûr,	his command acteth afar off ;
his spirit is like the mountains,	thou seest not the foundations ;
like the stars of heaven,	thou fixest no limit to their number.
I will celebrate his name,	his word is faithful ;
his spirit is like the mountains,	thou seest not the foundations ;
like the stars of heaven,	sublime at all times !
Thy (knowledge),	Asshûr, no god hath learnt it ;
Thy (counsels),	they are beyond understanding.

The hymn is, however, considerably mutilated; and, while its spirit of praise does not equal that of the Psalms, *e.g.* viii., xxix. (Vg. 28), etc., which at first sight it resembles, it is more than likely that, with the seeming totality of similar hymns, it ended with a reference to the interests of the hymnist.

The following hymn to Ishtar is no less fine (translated by Mr. L. W. King):

I pray unto thee, Lady of ladies, Goddess of goddesses !
O Ishtar, queen of all peoples, directress of mankind !

O Irnini, thou art raised on high, mistress of the Spirits of heaven ;
Thou art mighty, thou hast sovereign power, exalted is thy name !
Thou art the light of heaven and earth, O valiant daughter of the Moon-god.
Ruler of weapons, arbitress of the battle !
Framer of all decrees, wearer of the crown of dominion !
O lady, majestic is thy rank, over all the gods is it exalted ! . . . .
Where thou lookest in pity, the dead man lives again, the sick is healed ;
The afflicted is saved from his affliction, when he beholdeth thy face !
I, thy servant, sorrowful, sighing, and in distress cry unto thee.
Look upon me, O my lady, and accept my supplication,
Truly pity me, and hearken unto my prayer !
Cry unto me, " It is enough ! " and let thy spirit be appeased !
How long shall my body lament, which is full of restlessness and confusion ?
How long shall my heart be afflicted, which is full of sorrow and sighing ?

It would be hard to find, in Babylonian literature, a religious hymn entirely devoted to celebrating the glory of the gods, to the expression of admiration, gratitude, love, and confidence, without some mention at least of the interests of their pious clients. The hymns usually begin with magnificent praises of the Divinity: they celebrate his attributes in terms of high rhetoric and often sublime poetry: they regularly end with a petition. One feels that the main, if not the unique, preoccupation, is to win the goodwill of the gods so as to appease them, to obtain their good graces, to get a favourable answer to a request. Professor Jastrow assures us that Babylonians and Assyrians alike only turned to the gods when they wanted to obtain something—patronage or cure, deliverance from ill, or favour. The pure praise of the gods without secondary preoccupations does not exist in the Assyro-Babylonian cultus.

Yet prayer was frequent among them. Their language has a dozen synonyms to express it. " I

pray daily" is a formula constantly recurring in their correspondence. No doubt the ordinary salutation is, "Good state of heart and good state of body," *i.e.* "Happiness and health!" but it is already much to recognize man's dependence therein upon the Divine Being.

A son writes to his father: "Every day I pray to Nabu and Nanâ for the life of my father; and for the intention of my father I offer homage to Ezida" [temple of Nabu at Borsippa]. An official writes to the king's mother: "May Bel and Nabu bless the king's mother, my sovereign lady. Every day I pray Nabu and Nanâ to grant life and long days to the king of the lands, my sovereign, and to the mother of the king, my sovereign lady. By the favour of the gods I am well, and all those who are with me. . . . Pray to Bel and Belit for me." And again we read: "By the grace of the gods I am well: if I pray to the gods, I obtain my desire."

VII. Idea of Sin. Moral System

To enter into the Babylonian conscience, we must cite a rather long text taken from an incantation, where, in order to get rid of an evil, it is attempted to discover what was the sin which caused that evil.

[I invoke you, great gods,]	[. . . . god and] goddess, lords of deliverance,
[For N. the son of] N.	Whose god is N., whose goddess N.,
Who is ill, sad, anxious, afflicted.	Has he offended his god? his goddess?
Has he given a refusal instead of a promise,	Or a promise for a refusal?
Has he separated son from father?	Has he separated father from son?
[And so on through several relationships].	
Has he refused to release a captive?	To deliver a prisoner?
Has he sinned against no god?	Has he offended no goddess? . . .
Has he afflicted a god?	Has he scorned a goddess?
Violence against his grandfather?	Hatred for his elder brother?

Has he scorned father and mother? Offended his elder sister?
Given but little? Refused much?
Said Yea for Nay? And Nay for Yea?
Has he weighed with false weights? . . .
Has he used false money? Not used good money?
Has he disinherited a legitimate son, Established a bastard?
Has he traced false boundaries, Not traced true boundaries? . . .
Has he entered his neighbour's house? Approached his neighbour's wife?
Has he spilt his neighbour's blood? Stolen his neighbour's coat?
Has he risen up against a superior?
Has he had frankness in his mouth and falseness in his heart? . . .
Has he taught dark things, and revealed what should be hid? . . .
Has he steeped his hands in magic and sorcery?
Is it for a grave sin that he shall have committed?
For a company that he shall have scattered?
For a united family that he shall have disunited?
Is it for all the slights he may have put upon his god and goddess?
Shall he have promised in heart and word and broken his promise? . . .
Shall he have withheld what he had consecrated?[1]

The moral sense, then, of these pagans was not wholly perverted; indeed in some points they manifest a certain delicacy of conscience. Yet, in spite of the assertions of Friedrich Delitzsch in his *Babel und Bibel*, the Babylonians and Assyrians were far from having as profound a conception of the nature of sin as what we find among the Israelites. "The grace of the merciful god," F. Jeremias justly notes, "the result sought and hoped for through prayer, is but deliverance from sickness. That is the meaning of *remission of sins*. Forgiveness and cure are synonyms. This must be our starting-point would we estimate

[1] H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion*, 2nd tablet, "Shurpu."

their notions of fault and sin, of mercy and of pardon."

A learned Assyriologist and religious historian, Tiele, gave a like verdict: "Babylon and Assyria had not yet achieved a clear distinction between sin and the results of sin." They felt that the ill from which they were suffering was the chastisement of some fault; and they regretted the fault as being the cause of their own ill; they humbled themselves to appease the angered god; it was a servi e fear. Yet their regrets and supplication are expressed in words of tender pathos:

> The faults I have committed, I know them not . . . .
> The Lord hath looked on me in the anger of his heart,
> The god in the fury of his heart hath visited me . . . .
> I seek [for help]; none stretcheth out his hand to me;
> I weep, and lo, there is none beside me.
> I cry, and none heareth me.
> Sad, prostrate on the earth, lifting not mine eyes,
> To my merciful god I direct my lamentation.

The suppliant does not always know what deity he has offended; and for fear of omitting precisely this offended god in his invocation, he implores the "unknown god," the "unknown goddess" (*cf.* Lect. XIII., 18, 19, and Acts 17^{23}).

One document, from the library of Asshurbanipal, is of such high significance, both from its intrinsic beauty and from the illegitimate comparisons which have been made between it and Isaiah's description of the suffering servant of Yahweh, that we must translate a considerable portion of it.

1st Strophe (*My ill resists all remedies*).

I came to life,
in vain I turned this way or that,
suffering was supreme,
I invoked my god,
I prayed to my goddess,
The seer by his visions
by a sacrifice the priest
I advanced in age,
it was evil, evil;
I saw no good.
he hid his face from me;
she lifted not her head.
revealed not to me the future;
established not my right.

I evoked the dead ; they taught me nothing ;
the wizard with his rites took not off from me my lot . . . .

2nd Strophe (*I seemed afflicted like a sinful man*).

As though an offering to the god I had not offered,
nor over the (sacred) food invoked my goddess,
humilated my face, known prostration !
Such is he, whose mouth is shut to supplications, to prayers,
who neglects the day of the god and forgets the new moon, etc.

3rd Strophe (*Yet was I always faithful to gods and king*).

As for me, I busied myself with supplications, with prayers ;
prayer was my care and sacrifice my law ;
The day of the worship of the god made the joy of my heart ;
the day of my goddess, my goods and my riches.
The homages paid to the King were my happiness,
his joyous feast a pleasure for me.
I have taught in my country to revere the name of the god ;
to honour the name of the goddess I have instructed my people.
The majesty of the king have I made equal to a god's ;
to the people have I taught the fear of the palace :
I know that unto God that is well-pleasing.

4th Strophe (*The designs of the gods are obscure*).

What is good in itself for the god is an evil ;
What is in itself vile in the eyes of the god, it is good !
Who knoweth the will of the gods who are in heaven?
The dark divine design O who can grasp it ?
How should weak mortals be instructed in the ways of a god ?
Man that liveth in the evening in the morning is dead ;
swiftly is he smitten down suddenly is he broken.
For an instant he singeth unto music ;
and the moment after he sigheth like a mourner.
As from white to black his heart changeth.
When he is an-hungered one would say "A corpse !"
When he is filled he maketh himself equal to his god.
In his well-being he saith " I shall ascend to heaven !"
In his pain he deemeth to go down to hell.

5th (?) Strophe (*He is smitten with paralysis*).

Into a prison for me — my house is changed :
in the bands of my flesh — my arms are chained ;
in me, as in a prison, — my feet are shut up . . . .
With scourges hath he stricken me ; — full of [. . . .]
With his rod hath he pierced me : — the wound is deep.
All the day — the persecutor pursues me ;
all night he suffereth me not — to breathe one moment.
My joints — are loosed, dislocated, etc.

6th Strophe (*All, gods, priests and men, desert him* . . . .).

. . . . The tomb was gaping — and was seizing its prey ;
before I was dead — the mourning was finished !
All my country cried out, — " He is lost ! "
My enemy heard it, — and his face shone.
The joyful news — made glad his heart.
[Yet] I know the day — when my whole family,
in the midst of the protecting gods — was beloved of their divinity.[1]

Now, be this sufferer king or governor (which is more likely), the fact remains that the notion *essentially* characteristic of the suffering servant of Yahweh—*that he is suffering and dying for the crimes of his brethren*—is wholly lacking in his lamentation.[2]

He hath taken on himself our sicknesses,
and with our sorrows he hath laden himself ;
And he appeared to us smitten,
stricken of God and afflicted.

He was pierced for our sins,
bruised for our iniquities :
The chastisement of our salvation was upon him,
and by his stripes we are healed.

[1] Zimmern, with less probability, translates these two lines :

"[Yet] I know the day when my tears shall cease,
When in the midst of the protecting gods their divinity is honoured."

[2] See *Etudes*, Nov. 20, Dec. 20, 1902, March 1903, p. 803, *La Bible et l'Assyriologie*, by A. Condamin, S.J., Lecture XVII., 28.

All we were wandering like sheep,
each was following his own way;
And Yahweh made fall upon him
the iniquity of us all . . . .

Wherefore shall I give him multitudes for his lot;
he shall receive crowds for his share of the spoil;
Because he gave himself over unto death,
and was counted among the sinners,
While he was carrying the transgressions of a multitude,
and was interceding for the sinners. (Is. 53, $^{4\text{-}6, 12}$.)

However close be the parallel which may be established between the Assyrian poetry and the lamentations of Job, the poignant and sublime verses of the Hebrew prophet witness to a gulf between the inspired conception of the suffering Messiah and the heathen paralytic.

The following text (published by K. D. Macmillan) recalls the aphorisms of the Book of Proverbs:

Open not thy mouth, guard thy lips,
When thou art angered, say not a single word:
Of having spoken over swiftly thou shalt afterwards repent;
By refraining from words thou shalt not afflict thy soul.
Every day offer to thy God
Sacrifice, prayer, and fitting incense;
Before thy God stand thou with a pure heart (?),
For that is what befits the Divinity.
Prayer, petition, and prostration
In the morning offer thou to him . . . (?) . . . .
And greatly with [the help of] God shalt thou prosper.
In thy wisdom study the [sacred] tablets;
The fear [of God] begets favour,
Sacrifice enriches life;
And prayer delivers from sin.

This document ranks among those especially remarkable for their exalted sentiments. Unfortunately, the second half of the tablet is mutilated, and we do not exactly know towards whom the benevolence recommended by it is to be shown. Delitzsch exaggerates its importance when he sees in it a parallel to the commandment to love one's neighbour as one's self. No: the love of one's neighbour

appears nowhere in the cuneiform texts; it is noticeably lacking in the code of Hammurabi, which inflicts the death penalty on one who helps a slave to escape, or who shelters a runaway slave. Deuteronomy, however, recommends this: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a slave who is escaped from his master unto thee" (Deut. $23^{15, 16}$). It has been said that Hammurabi never legislates from the moral point of view. That is true: he never seeks a religious motive for his interdiction of unrighteousness. But further, he not only does not ban covetousness, or evil desires, but actually authorizes certain immoral practices such as ritual prostitution.[1]

VIII. The Next Life: The Home of the Dead

Fr. Dhorme, O.P., gives an admirable *résumé* of the evidence for the Home of the Dead, drawn from the various sources, especially from the *Descent of Ishtar*.

Hades is called *kigallu*, "the vast land," or often "the land" for short. Its queen is known, Ereshkigal, "Lady of the Vast Land," and its king, Nergal. For Hades is regarded as an autonomous kingdom with laws of its own. . . . No hope of ever leaving it; it is "the land without return . . . . the house whence he that enters goes out no more. . . ." A sevenfold barrier guarantees the security of the kingdom of the dead. The condition of the shades is not cheerful. They are in thickest obscurity, whence the name, *House of Darkness*. For food they have dust and mire. They were depicted with wings like vampires. They came to torment the living (*cf.* Lectures XI., 7, 12; XIII., 13), and many an incantation was framed to drive them off. They especially were to be pitied "whose shade had none that concerned himself with it. . . ." The shade impatiently awaited the burying of the corpse. As long as the body lies in the fields, the shade has no rest. A better fate awaited those who fell on the field of battle. A whole category of the dead had beds in which to rest and pure water to quench their thirst.[2]

[1] § 181, *cf.* Herodotus, i. 199; Baruch, Vulg., vi. 43.
[2] *Choix de textes assyro-babyloniens*, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv.

We may add a few words of Mr. M. Jastrow on this topic:

> Only occasionally do we find the expression of a faint belief that all is not dark and gloomy for the dead, that at least some favoured individuals enjoy a better fortune. At one time the view appears to have been held that the kings after their death were accorded a place among the gods. Statues of the rulers were placed in the temples and accorded divine honours, and even temples were erected bearing their names. But though this view may have had a strong hold upon the masses at one time, in connexion with the belief that the rulers, as standing close to the gods, were in some way descended from them, it soon lost its hold, and we learn little about it after the days of Hammurabi.[1]

IX. Babylon and Israel[2]

1. The history of Israel has, in its main lines, been remarkably confirmed by the discoveries of Assyriology. Radical criticism may have suffered from the witness of the monuments; truly scientific criticism has but ground to congratulate herself. Old Testament History, instead of appearing isolated, hung as it were between earth and sky, has come into contact with that of neighbouring peoples. It has lost nothing. Much light has been thrown on its human side; its divine character has been shown in high relief: it remains *Sacred* History.

No point of doctrine contained in the inspired volume has been lost by abandoning a system of chronology, founded on a mistaken interpretation of the Bible text, for the surer and more homogeneous dates of Assyrian chronology.

In the immense Babylonian literature—the small *published* fraction is already incomparably greater than the whole of Hebrew literature—one point calls for attention: the *anonymity* of the authors. The name of no single author survives. Instead of this,

[1] The technical and complex questions of priesthood and sacrifice are perforce omitted.

[2] *Cf.* "Babylone et la Bible," by A. Condamin, S.J., *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique*, Paris, Beauchesne.

the scribes usually add their name and degree at the foot of the text they have copied. This helps us to understand how a certain number of the books of the Bible (most, in fact, except the prophets) have come down to us without their author's name. Among the Semites and in old times men were far from having our modern ideas on literary appropriation!

2. We must say a word upon the Comparative History of Religions, so much misused to-day.

Many an author adopts the converse of the argument of Clement of Alexandria, with no more critical spirit and with as little success. The learned Clement and some of his contemporaries thought poets and philosophers had plundered the sacred books of the Hebrews. To prove the theft, it sufficed that two authors should say more or less the same thing on any subject you please, *e.g.* that wine drunk in moderation is useful, and harmful if taken in excess. "In the Comparative History of Religions," says M. A. Lods,[1] "to confine one's self to noting similarities is labour lost . . . . we must establish *interconnection*."

It is indeed rare that any similarity be so typical that *by itself* it proves that one of the two similars is derived from the other. Human nature is essentially the same at all times and in all lands, with its faculties, its needs, tendencies, frailty, and misery. Hundreds of religious practices are but what is conformable to the construction of human nature. It is puerile to feel surprise, in matter of this sort, at similarities, eagerly to note them down as discoveries, to let the eye be caught by some external features of resemblance and forthwith detect *imitation*. To return to the hymn to Ishtar quoted above (p. 18), we can easily understand that the sentiments of tender confidence, expressed by a Christian in his

[1] *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 1904, vol. l. p. 87. *Cf.* Lect. XIV., p. 16.

prayers to Mary, can, without being an echo, give forth the same sound as the cries of the grief-stricken Babylonian invoking his merciful goddess. The latter recites "a prayer of lifting up of hands"; the former naturally uplifts his hands to implore succour from on high. The Babylonian copyist says at the end that he has written this poem "for [the preservation of] his life." Many a mediæval scribe has spontaneously used similar formulæ.

3. We must, further, remember that Israel, Babylon, and Assyria were of a common stock. This or that Mosaic prescription, instead of being directly connected with the Hammurabic code, may often merely preserve a very ancient custom. A common origin, an identical cast of mind, and sisterhood of dialect explain many an expression, simile, metaphor, and style of versification.

However, from the strong influence undoubtedly exercised by the folks of the Euphrates on Hebraic material civilization—the Hebrews' division of time, their weights and measures, were probably thus borrowed—we may not conclude at once to a parallel influence in religious life. Even under apostate kings, Achaz especially and Manasseh, invading superstition was always vigorously resisted by the prophets.

4. Once, however, any *real link*, a *real interconnection* between doctrines, has been established by the rigorous method proposed with so much tact and science by Fr. Delehaye in a chapter[1] on "Pagan Reminiscences and Survivals in Christian Worship," the Catholic position will have no difficulty in admitting it.

That "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7^{22}), was, we may surmise, providential, and that he might learn something from it. The Fathers of the Church, accordingly, never hesitated to recognize foreign importations in the

[1] *The Legends of the Saints*, c. vi. (Westminster Series).

Israelite cult. Fr. F. Prat, S.J., cites Chrysostom, Origen, Jerome, Eusebius, and Theodoret to this effect, and, in conclusion, the great commentator Tostat, who writes: "Many a ceremony was common to Jew and pagan: indeed, they were only accorded to the Jews *because* prevalent among the Gentiles. The Jews had become accustomed to them: God tolerated them after effacing all relics of superstition."[1]

5. Yet, in conclusion, we confess that for one who will not admit the *supernatural character* of Old Testament religion, all *essential* difference between it and its neighbours must disappear. Even for those rationalist historians who acknowledge the superiority of the Israelites in religious matters, and recognize in them the only strictly monotheistic people of antiquity, this phenomenon is but an affair of peculiar genius, of especially happy evolution in suitable circumstances. It is Supernatural Revelation, and it alone, that cleaves the abyss between Hebrew and all else. Illuminated by that divine intercourse, the prophets kept away from Yahweh's religion all the magic and superstition, the disgraceful practices and ritual murders held in honour by their neighbours; they preserved monotheism intact; they constantly developed and exalted it. We have here no difference merely of degree, to be diminished and perhaps annulled by new discoveries; but a difference of order, or true Transcendence, which comes from this fact, that the religion of Israel is *revealed*, and *supernatural*.

In the eyes of certain ill-advised apologists, this transcendence of the true religion is transformed into an *absolute and complete opposition* of the divine to erroneous cults. Abbé de Broglie has shown the deplorable results of such an apologetic.[2] We have seen that in Babylonian literature, which represents

[1] *Le code du Sinaï, sa genèse et son évolution*, 1904, pp. 17, 18.
[2] *Religion et Critique*, edited by Abbé C. Piat, 1897, pp. 132–139.

the religious thought of so many generations, not all is moral perversion and superstition: far from it. We may, without fear, admire its multitude of sublime ideas clad in a vesture of splendid poetry. Through the tangle of polytheistic and mythical imaginings is descried a God who is Creator and Governor of the universe, who punishes and pardons sins, with whom man enters into communication by prayer. The obligation of the moral law, the sense of guilt from sin committed, the inevitable retribution, are affirmed in a multitude of texts. By the side of truths perceived by the natural powers of reason, some faint traces of primitive revelation may have subsisted through the centuries. And God, when He gave to the elect people the privilege of Revelation, did not leave the other peoples altogether without light or help; He could not indeed exclude them from His providence in the natural order; He did not will to refuse to them absolutely and wholly, pagans as they were, that supernatural grace which should help them to live well and reach their supreme End.

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THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT SYRIA

By G. S. Hitchcock, B.A.

Syria

The name Syria has sometimes been explained as Zyria or land of Zur, that is, of Tyre, and sometimes as a decapitated form of Assyria. It is, however, the Babylonian Suri, which included Northern Mesopotamia together with the mountains of Armenia and Cilicia. At a later time, Greek and Roman employed the term for the Arabs' Esh-Sham, the left-hand or Mediterranean side of the great Arabian peninsula. As a political term, it has been limited to the northern half of this region, the land between Taurus and Hermon, and even to Aram alone. The name Palestine—that is, Philistia—was extended to cover the southern half. It has been said truly that there is no scientific reason for any such division between the north and the south; and certainly for our purpose we may regard Syria as referring to the land, about 400 miles long by 70 to 100 miles broad, which is bounded by the Taurus mountains, the river Euphrates, the Syrian desert, Egypt, and the Mediterranean.

From north to south stretches a mountain chain, a barrier against the moist winds from the western sea and the dry winds from the eastern sands. For seven or eight months of the year the grey limestone heights of Lebanon, the White, are crowned with snow. On the other hand, tropical plants are found where the valley of the Jordan lies below the level of the sea.

So the land illustrates every zone of temperature and great variety in landscape. But the mountains, and especially the two Lebanon ranges, divide the country into small districts. Indeed, its history is little more than the annals of its cities.

It was the road for religion, trade, war, art, and letters between the empire on the Nile and that on the Euphrates and Tigris. Down through the Taurus passes in the north, came the Hittites with their Mongolian pigtails and their snow-shoes. Over the sea came the Greeks from their islands. And from the Syrian desert came the constant overflow of the nomad population, which had of old overswept the Hamite natives of Syria, and crossed the Euphrates to establish Semitic kingdoms in Accad of the northern Babylonia and in Sumer of the southern.

The Syrians

In the north of Syria were the Mongolian Hittites, who had taken Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh on the Orontes. There also were the Semite Aramæans, who had founded the cities of Damascus, Hamath, and Zobah. The Semite Phœnicians occupied about 200 miles of the northern coast, and within an area of 4000 square miles established the cities and league of Arvad, Sidon, Tyre, Beyrût, Simyra, Gebal, and Akko. Of these the chief at first was Arvad; but this city yielded later to Sidon, which in turn surrendered its pre-eminence to Tyre about the year 1197 B.C.

The south coast of Syria was occupied by the uncircumcised Philistines, probably an Aryan people, who had descended from Crete or Asia Minor on Egypt, occupied the Delta, and marched into Syria not long before the arrival of the Israelites from Egypt. Seizing about 2000 square miles of the *Shephelah* or lowland, they formed a confederacy of the five cities, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. None the

less, they surrendered to Canaanite religion and civilization. East of them lay Israel and Judah with their chief cities, Samaria and Jerusalem. Still farther eastward, and beyond the Jordan and the Dead Sea, were the kingdoms of Ammon and Moab with their towns Rabbath-Ammon, that is, the chief city of Ammon, and Rabbath-Moab, that is, the chief city of Moab. South of Moab, and in the valley by Mount Seir, lived the Edomites, who had dispossessed the Horites, that is, the cave-dwellers.

Our Sources of Information

To ascertain the religion of these Syrian peoples, we have first of all the evidence of the Hebrew Bible, which we may quote according to the naming and numbering of English-speaking Protestants and Jews. There are also the hieroglyphs of Egypt, the Hittite inscriptions, and the cuneiforms of Assyria and Babylonia. In particular, there are the tablets found at Tell-el-Amarna. These were letters from the Syrian chieftains to their Egyptian masters, Amen-hotep III. and Amen-hotep IV., about 1400 B.C. There is the inscribed stone the Moabite Mesha, placed at Dibon about 840 B.C. There is the Aramaic inscription Panammu, the son of Qaral, carved in relief on a statue of Hadad, the Sun-god, at Gergin in the north before 732 B.C. There are two Aramaic inscriptions, left at the neighbouring Zinjirli by Bar-Rekub soon after that year 732 B.C.; but of the two, we are now interested in that alone on the monument to Panammu, the son of Barzur. The Hebrew inscription of Siloam, though it probably belongs to the time of Hezekiah, who began to reign in 719, is valueless for our purpose. But there are four Phœnician inscriptions, made about the year 300 B.C. One is the dedication of a temple by Yehu-milk, king of Gebal, to the Great One, the Baalath or Lady of Gebal. Another is the Temple Tariff,

found at Marseilles, but evidently Carthaginian, as the stone belongs to the African coast. The third is the epitaph of Tabnith, a king of Sidon, who died about the year 290 B.C. And the fourth is the epitaph left by his son Eshmunazar about the year 270 B.C. Perhaps we may add to these an inscription made at Masûb in the year 221 B.C.

We have also remains, such as broken walls, ruined temples, altar stones, and tombs, besides vases, coins, seals, statues and statuettes. There is the account of Herodotus, Nehemiah's contemporary, who died about 406 B.C. Menandros of Ephesus, a Greek writer of the second century B.C., has left us some fragments in Josephus' *Antiquities* of 93 A.D., and in the same writer's work written *against Apion* a little later. We can find help in Plutarch, who wrote during the second half of the first century A.D., and in his contemporary Philo of Byblus, that is, of Gebal. Philo's Greek account professes to represent an ancient Phœnician one, but unfortunately exists only in the few fragments Eusebius has preserved in his *Preparation for the Gospel.* Lucian, who was born about 150 A.D. in Northern Syria at Samosata on the Euphrates, has left us in his work *On the Syrian Goddess* an account, professedly by an Assyrian, of visits to the Syrian temples of Mylitta, that is, Belit or Baalat, Ashtart, the female counterpart of Baal.

The Historical Phases of Ancient Syria

Laid open by its position to so many influences, and divided by the form of its surface into so many small states, Syria became a series of crucibles, where many elements combined in various proportions. Whatever was the original religion of the original inhabitants, it was soon affected by foreign cults. As early as 3000 B.C., Lugal-zaggisi of Gishban marches westward to the occupation of North Syria. Two centuries later another king, Sargon I. of Agadé, that is, Akkad,

marches from the Euphrates to the Levant, and sets up his statue on the Syrian coast. His son, Naram-Sin, pursues the conquest, and celebrates it not only by announcing himself as "king of Agadé, king of the four quarters of the earth," but also by naming himself "the god Niram-Sin, the god of Agadé." Indeed, we may say that the Chaldean or early Babylonian kings ruled Syria for five centuries after 3000 B.C.

For three centuries more Babylonia was sufficiently occupied with her own troubles; and then, about 2200 B.C., Hammurabi, the Amraphel pursued by Abraham, began a new dynasty in Babylon, framed his famous code, and assisted in a military expedition through Syria. For five centuries Babylon dominates Syria, though the land is not uninfluenced by Egypt or by Crete, then in its first "Mycenæan" period. About 1700 B.C. the Mitanni came from Asia Minor, and, settling on the north-east of Syria, cut off the Babylonian approach.

From 1700 B.C. and for five centuries, Syria was a battlefield or tributary for Egypt. Early in the period the kings of Thebes march northward, expel the Hyksos or Shepherd kings from the Nile, and then defeat them in Palestine. Syria now becomes directly subject to Egypt; but the Tell-el-Amarna letters of 1400 B.C. show that the language and the writing of Babylon still prevail; and there is some evidence that the Mycenæan civilization of Crete, in its second or Achæan period, penetrates Syria as well as Egypt. Now through the passes of the Taurus pour the Mongolian Hittites from Cilicia and Cappadocia. Syria becomes a battle-ground for Egyptians and Hittites, till Ramessu II., oppressor of the Hebrews, and the Hittite king divide Syria between them by a treaty of the year 1304 B.C. In 1200 B.C. Egypt is again menaced by the Libyans, and immediately afterwards is attacked again by the peoples of the Sea.

For nearly three centuries the decline of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon left the Syrian states free to develop themselves. Tyre led the Phœnician cities, and these colonized the Western Mediterranean. The Aramæan cities of Damascus and Zobah flourished. And Israel gathered strength that culminated when Solomon in 960 became king. About 931 B.C. the empire of Solomon was shattered. Israel and Judah divided in war. Shishak or Sheshonq I. of Egypt was now able to invade Palestine and spoil Jerusalem. Moab and Ammon asserted their independence. And the Aramæans thought it a good opportunity to struggle with Israel for the caravan road between Damascus and the sea.

From the crossing of the Euphrates by Ashur-natsirpal in 876 to the death of Ashur-banipal in 626, Syria was spent in a struggle with Assyria. Then for twenty-eight years the Scythians overswept both Syria and Assyria. In the east, Babylon rose to power. Nebuchadrezzar defeated Egypt at Carchemish in 607, crushed a revolt of the Syrian states, and led captives from ruined Jerusalem to Babylon.

That later Babylonian empire lasted only 87 years, and a new era began with the fall of Babylon in October, 539. Syria became a Persian province, destined to pass under Greek influence two centuries later in 333 B.C., when the battle of Issus in Cilicia opens the road for Alexander the Great. In 65 B.C. Pompey invades Syria, and makes it a Roman province.

The Syrian Gods

As to the names of the Syrian gods, about fifty are known from the Phœnician inscriptions. Some are known from the names borne by men or women, the servant or man or branch or brother or client or daughter or sister or handmaid or bride of a god or goddess. But this does not help us to determine the

character of the object worshipped; and it has truly been said of "Tanith," sometimes supposed to be the Carthaginian name of Ashtart, that we have no certain knowledge either as to the meaning of the word or the nature of the goddess, though the name occurs about 2000 times in the Phœnician inscriptions of Carthage. In the case of imported idols, it is sometimes easy to supplement the local information, especially in the cases of the Babylonian Ishtar, Rimmon, Shamash, Merodach, Dagan, Tammuz, Nergal, and Nabu, in those of the Egyptian Isis, Osiris, Horus, Ptah, Amana or Amon, Absit or Bubastis, and to a less degree in those of the Hittite Set and Anath, if indeed the former is not Egyptian and the latter Babylonian.

Philo of Byblus, that is, of Gebal, tells us that El was the chief god of his native city, and worshipped without temple or ritual. But the evidence is not conclusive, for a priesthood was attached to Elath, the female counterpart of El. However, if we would try to retrace the history of the word "El," we should find it the primitive name of God among the Semites, for it occurs in Assyrian and Phœnician, as well as in the Sabæan or Himyaritic of Southern Arabia. Probably derived from a root which meant "to be strong," it indicated God as the Mighty One. In this word, then, as in the applicability of the name "Baal" to all the Phœnician gods, we meet a trace of an original monotheism, which the Semites held before their separation into the eastern, northern, and southern groups.

Within Syria there were two influences at work to modify the idea conceived of God. The soil, the climate, the varied landscape, the storm, the earthquake, and the importance of springs and rivers drew the attention to natural powers and objects. Hence the oath of the Phœnician Hannibal, as it was given to Philip of Macedon, according to Polybius, vii. 9, 2, called in witness Sun, Moon, and Earth, Rivers,

Meadows, and Waters. So too the Baals, or masters of agriculture, were honoured with festivals and sacrifices. But the breaking up of Syria into small districts emphasized city life; and hence the importance of the Milks or Molechs, the kings, the royal gods of the cities.

As to the Baalim or Baals, the name means owners. It is an ordinary word to express dominion, whether of men or gods. Therefore it could be used of the true God, till it was needed as a name to distinguish the idols of Canaan from Jehovah of Israel. Then Hosea, ii. 16, about 750 B.C., said to Israel in the name of Jehovah:—

> And it shall come to pass in that day (declared Jehovah),
> Thou shalt call me *Ish-i*, my husband,
> And thou shalt no more call to me, *Baal-i*, my master.

Hitherto some Israelites had borne names containing the title "Baal" as an element. Just as a Phœnician might be known as Hannibal, "the favour of Baal," so one of David's captains was Baal-hanan, "Baal was favourable," and one of Saul's sons was Ish-Baal, "the man of Baal," a name afterwards recorded as Ish-bosheth, "the man of the shameful thing."

The ordinary rural worship was of Baalim or Baals, rather than of Baal, though land watered neither by rain nor by artificial irrigation, but by streams, was said to be watered by Baal, the local god. To the Baalim were attributed the fruitfulness of the soil and the cattle, and their agricultural festivals were marked by gross immorality.

The god of a city became its Milk or king, but naturally continued to be its Baal, and would have some distinctive character. So Baal-zebub, "Baal of the fly," whose name was afterwards used to designate the chief of the evil spirits, was worshipped at Ekron. The name implied his character as a giver of oracles, the flies being his messengers, though some think this

Baal was a sun-god, the sun being imaged as a huge fly.

The sun, too, was a Baal, and as such had a temple at Beth-shemesh, "the house of the sun." The same object of worship is found under the name Beth-hammon, "house of Hammon," for Hammon was represented with a crown of sun-rays, and honoured by *hammamim*, "sun-pillars," the word being a plural noun from a root meaning "to be hot."

Of special importance was the Baal of Tyre. For it Ahab built a temple and altar in Samaria to please his queen, Jezebel the daughter of Eth-baal, king and chief priest of Sidon. And this cult flourished at Jerusalem under the influence of the queen-regent, Jezebel's daughter Athaliah. The second Hebrew book of *Kings*, xxiii. 5, shows that this idol was then regarded as distinct from the sun, for the account of the idolatrous priests destroyed by Josiah makes the distinction in speaking of—

> Those who offered incense to the Baal,
> To the sun and to the moon,
> And to the planets and to all the host of the heavens.

At Tyre, indeed, this Baal, the Baal-Zur or Baal of Tyre, bore the name Melkarth, or rather Milk-qarth, "king of the city"; and according to Herodotus, its temple was built about 2740 B.C.

Everywhere among the Semites, Milk or Melek, that is, "king," was employed as a divine name. So the second book of *Kings*, xvii. 31, tells us of the Sepharwîm transported to Samaria from Sippar in North Babylonia, as it would appear, rather than from the Syrian Sepharwîm, as some have thought. Accustomed as they had been to worship Adar, that is, Father of Judgement, a god of the Deluge, and Anu, a god supposed to rule a third of the sky, they now worshipped and burnt their children in the fire to Adrammelech, that is, "Adar is king," and to Anammelech, that is, "Anu is king." At Palmyra,

Malak-bel, King Baal, was worshipped; and on one of Sennacherib's cylinders we read of an Edomite chief, Malik-rammu, Malik or "the king is exalted," Malik being the title of his god.

Among the Ammonites, who lived between the Syrian desert and the Ten Tribes of Israel, a favourite god was known as Melek and Milcom or Milkom, apparently a modified form of the word for "our king," and derived from *Melek*, "king." The Jewish scribes who inserted the vowels in the Hebrew Bible preferred to read *bosheth*, that is, a shameful thing; and hence the consonants of *Melek* have the vowels of *bosheth* to guide the reader. Combining the consonants of *Melek* and the vowels of *bosheth*, we have the word *Molek*, or *Molech* as it is often written.

The city of Gebal, known to Greeks and Romans as Byblos, was supposed to be under the protection of Adhôni, the Adonis of the Greeks. The name is well known in Hebrew as Adhônay, my Lord, this form of the word being used in speaking of God. But at Gebal the local god was identified, as Origen and St. Jerome imply in their comments on *Ezekiel* viii. 14, with the Babylonian Tammuz and the Egyptian Osiris. Elements of the Egyptian and the Babylonian worship were then introduced. Women wept for Adônis, the original mourning having been for the sun's imaginary death in winter; but at a later time Adonis was explained as a beautiful youth, who had been killed by a boar he was hunting on Lebanon, or by the justly enraged husband of the wanton Baaltis. The later explanations, however, are due to the Euhemerist fashion of resolving all the gods into men, and all myths into histories.

Beyrût, or Berytus, celebrated the Cabeiri, the name being the same as the Hebrew *Kabbîrîm*, or powerful ones. They were said to be the sons of Zadik, that is, Justice, a personification of the Divine attribute. These Cabeiri have been identified with Castor and

Pollux, and their creation has been referred to the primitive Pelasgians of the Trojan coast and neighbouring islands; but there can be no question that the name is Semitic. To the Cabeiri were attributed the first shipbuilding and the discovery of working in metal. Hence these dwarfs, as they were represented, became the patrons of arts and crafts.

Sidon cherished the cult of Eshmun, whom the Greeks identified with Asculapius. But the name is Semitic, and very closely related to the Hebrew word *shemôneh*, that is, eight. Certainly Eshmun was said to be Zadik's eighth son; and since he was the eighth of the Cabeiri, those who explain the Cabeiri as the planets or planetary spheres, interpret Eshmun as the eighth sphere, lying outside the seven concentric circles assigned to the planets.

Though Adoni was favoured in Gebal, and Eshmun in Sidon, it is a mistake to represent these gods as feudal princes, who divided the land among themselves. Each city and each district paid homage to several idols. There was no exclusiveness in these pagan cults, for none of their gods had said, "Thou shalt not have other gods before My Face." Little as we know of the Edomites, for example, yet we have the names of five Edomite gods, Hadad, Qaush, Kozé, Â, and Edom. Hadad, indeed, had a wide sway, for the cult flourished among the Aramæans in North Syria, where the object appeared as a sun-god, though mentioned in the same breath with Shamash, the sun, and Resheph, the god of fire. And as to the god Edom, who was, like Asshur, a deified ancestor, it is not a little strange to find one of the Levites in David's time known as Obed-edom, the servant of Edom. It throws some light on the condition of Israel under Saul to find this Levite, in whose house the ark rested three months, had been dedicated to an Edomite idol in his childhood.

Some of the Syrian gods were adopted by the

Egyptians, just as some of them had been adopted by the Syrians from the Babylonians. Thus Abd-Khiba, king of Jerusalem about the year 1400 B.C., wrote some letters to his Egyptian master, and in the last of them he mentions the loss of his town Bît-Ninib, the temple of the Babylonian god Ninib. It has, however, been questioned whether the Dagan of the Babylonians is the Dagon of the Philistine Ashdod and Gaza. But there can be no doubt now that the latter, a human body with the tail of a fish, is derived from the former, a human figure hooded with the skin of a fish and skirted at the back with some scaly material. Besides, Dagon was known in South Palestine about two centuries before the Philistines entered it, as we see by the name of the chieftain Dagan-takala, who wrote to his Egyptian overlord about 1400 B.C. The suggestion of Philo Byblius that Dagon is to be translated by the Greek *Sitôn*, a corn-god, implies that the name is the same as *dagan*, corn; but it is generally recognised that the word Dagon is connected with *dag*, the Hebrew word for a fish, this being a symbol of fruitfulness.

The Syrian Goddesses

Dagon, as a nature-god, had a corresponding female Atar'-gatis. This name is a hybrid, formed by uniting Atar, that is, the Babylonian Ishtar, with the Syrian Hati, the aspirate of which represents an Oriental guttural. In Syriac the compound word appears as Tarhata, hence the Greek form Dérketo. This idol had a woman's body with the tail of a fish; and the cult was popular in Syria, where it possessed three famous temples, one in the north at Mabbug, that is, Hierapolis, another at the Philistine Ashkelon, and a third at Karnion, probably Ashtoreth Karnaim, or "the horned Ashtoreth," twenty-six miles south of Damascus. The last of these was destroyed by Judah the Maccabee, as we read in the first book of *Maccabees*, v. 44.

In reality, this idol was simply the Babylonian Ishtar. This is evident from the true form of the name as Ashtart, the Astarté of the Greeks. Hebrew scribes inserted the vowels of *bosheth*, "a shameful thing," and presented the word as Ashtoreth. The identity of this goddess with the Greek goddess of animal passion is asserted both by Greeks and by Phœnicians. Its identity with the Babylonian Ishtar has been denied on the ground that Ashtart was an impure moon-goddess, the Mylitta of Herodotus, i. 131, properly Belit, the feminine of Bel. Ishtar, however, is sometimes represented as chaste, and sometimes as an earth-goddess. Certainly, she represents fertile nature in the Babylonian myth which describes the slaying of the sun-god Tammuz by the winter and the stripping of her ornaments from the earth his bride, as she follows him into the world of the dead, to return with him and her adornments in the spring-time. There Ishtar is the goddess of animal and vegetable fruitfulness. Though the moon is masculine in Babylon, Ishtar becomes a moon-goddess as she travels westward. And that she travelled is clear from the letter written about the year 1400 B.C. by Dushratta, king of the Mitanni, on the north-east of Syria. He tells his Egyptian overlord that he is sending him a statue to be honoured and returned; and this statue represents none other than Ishtar of Nineveh. But though she becomes a moon-goddess in Syria, it is through a strange confusion. For at Gebal, she was depicted as horned, this feature being adopted from the Egyptian Isis, and supposed to indicate the crescent moon. Therefore Lucian in his *Syrian Goddess*, 4, judged Ashtart to be the moon; but in reality the symbol was a solar disc between two cow's horns. The Babylonian origin of Ashtart has also been advocated on the double ground that the object would have been masculine, as among the South Arabians, if it had originated among the Canaanites,

and that the employment of the plural Ashtaroth as a general name for "goddesses" corresponds to the Babylonian use of the plural Ishtar-ate.

Difficulties have been raised with regard to the origin of Hanath, the aspirate representing here also an Oriental guttural. The word is familiar to readers of the Old Testament in the names of such places as Beth-anath, the house or temple of Anath, and Jeremiah's Anathoth, or Anaths, the plural probably indicating statues of Anath. This object was a goddess of war; and it has been described as a Hittite goddess, adopted by Syrians and Egyptians. But it would seem certain that it was originally the female counterpart of the Akkadian Anu, the *an* or "god" of the sky, and itself a heaven-goddess or perhaps the earth, which is fruitful in the companionship of the sun. So Anath as well as Ishtar came from the banks of the Euphrates.

Combined Gods

The Syrian gods, then, represent powers of nature, and as such are double, male and female. But now we must note another feature of their history, the combination of two in one. It is not the same process as that by which the Egyptians united the gods of different districts, or combined a male, a female, and their offspring. In Syria it appears to have been the identification of two gods, or the endowing one with the attributes of another in addition to its own. When Zechariah, xii. 11, refers to Hadad-Rimmôn, this name must be understood as a compound of Hadad, the Syrian sun-god, and Rammânu, the air-god or thunderer of the Assyrians. In this case it seems the two gods are identified. But when Mesha of Moab inscribed the Dibon stone with a record of his victories, he said he had devoted 7000 Israelites to Ashtar-Chemosh, a combination of the Syriacized Ishtar and the Moabite Kemosh, the Assyrian goddess

of earthly love being endowed with the fierceness of Moab's sun-god. In the same way, Phœnicia united Ashtart with Milk in the compound Milk-Ashtart. So Melkarth, or rather Milk-qarth, king of the city, the Tyrian Baal, is compounded with Zad, the hunter, in Zad-milk-qarth, and Zad again with Tanith, an unknown goddess described in inscriptions as the Face of Baal, that is, his presence. Then Syria and Egypt contribute to form the name of the Ammonite king, Baalis, as given by Jeremiah, xl. 14; for it is more probable that the word is a contraction of Baal-Isis, "husband of Isis," than of Ben-alis, "son of delight."

Sacred Pillars

In the worship of Syrian gods, there would be an altar, a *mazzebah* or stone pillar, and an *asherah* or wooden pole. The temple was unessential, as the sacrifices could be offered in the open on high places. Indeed, about 2300 B.C. there were already *dolmens* or stone tables, *cromlechs* or stone circles, and *menhirs* or stone pillars. Small hollows, to receive libations, were made in the apex of the pillar, which seems to have been an altar originally. Then, when a separate altar was set up, the pillar became representative of a god or goddess, so that it is not to be explained as a phallic symbol. In the degeneration of the religion, the pillar ceases to be merely representative of the god, and becomes his dwelling, or even sinks to a fetish as the god himself. Afterwards, however, they are merely memorials, such as the Phœnicians inscribed "To the Rabbat, the Tanith Penê Baal and the Adôn, the Baal Hammon," that is, "To the great lady, the Tanith, Face of Baal, and the Lord, the Baal of Heat." Then the inscriber's name is given; and it is added that he has vowed the stone to those gods "because they have heard his voice. May they bless him!" But it was with a reference to himself alone

that Absalom raised a pillar in the king's valley at Jerusalem. For as we read in the second book of *Samuel*, xviii. 18, he had said after the death of his children—

> I have no son to keep the remembrance of my name.

But pillars had also been erected as a natural means of indicating the scenes of visions and miracles. So *Genesis* xxviii. records that Jacob raised and anointed a stone, and that he called it and the place Bethel, "the house of God," because God had there spoken to him in a dream. In the same way, as we are told in the first book of *Samuel*, vii. 12, Samuel marked the limit of a victory over the Philistines by a stone, which he named Eben-ezer, "the stone of help." Against such employment of the ancient custom there was no objection. Indeed, Isaiah, in xix. 19, foretold the time when—

> On that day, there shall be an altar to Jehovah
> In the midst of the land of Egypt:
> And a pillar beside its border to Jehovah.
> And it shall be for a sign
> And for a witness to Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt.

It was therefore only against the idolatrous use of such symbols that the law of *Deuteronomy* xvi. 21 commanded—

> Thou shalt not plant for thee an *asherah* of any tree
> Beside the altar of Jehovah thy God,
> Which thou shalt make for thee.
> And thou shalt not raise for thee a pillar,
> Which Jehovah thy God hates.

In the temple of Solomon, built with Phœnician aid, we find two pillars before the Holy Place. Strabo says there were two bronze pillars at Gades; and according to Herodotus, ii. 44, the temple of Tyre contained two, the one of gold and the other of emerald. The latter was probably of green glass, such as the Sidonians had under Egyptian instruction

learnt to make; and as the pillar was apparently hollow and lighted from within, it served as a light-house. So of the Tyrian Hiram we read in the first book of *Kings*, vii., that he formed the two pillars of bronze;

> And he raised the pillars for the porch of the temple.
> And he raised the right pillar;
> And he called its name *Yakhîn.*
> And he raised the left pillar;
> And he called its name *Boaz.*

Since *Yakhîn* means "He will establish," and *Boaz* means "in strength," the pillars stood as two witnesses to God, the source of Israel's hope and power. Thus an object which human thought and emotion had suggested as a symbol of God's might and faithfulness was taken up into the Revealed Religion of Israel, and charged with fuller meaning. The unhewn blocks of early times had been expressive of the Syrian mood. Not only religion but architecture also had cherished the rock as its primal figure. The tomb, as well as the house and the temple, found its original type in this; and the Israelite was only consecrating a Syrian title for a god, and exalting its significance, when he spoke of Jehovah as the Rock. When St. Paul spoke of our Lord, and when our Lord spoke of St. Peter, it was as of a Rock; and again, when St. Paul would describe the Church in his first letter to St. Timothy, iii. 15, he pictured it as the pillar and ground of the truth.

Sacred Poles

But besides the pillar, an *asherah* or tree-stump or wooden pole stood near the Canaanite altar. Some difficulty has arisen with regard to the word *asherah.* The Greek Vulgate rendered it as "a grove"; but this meaning is unsuitable in 1 *Kings* xiv. 23, where it is said of the Judæans under Rehoboam that—

> These also built them high-places and pillars and *asherîm,*
> Upon every high hill and under every green tree.

The translation is inapt in 1 *Kings* xv. 13 also, for it is said that Asa removed his mother Maachah, because she had an image for the *asherah*; though the last phrase is translated, strangely enough, by the Protestant Authorised Version as "an idol in a grove." The rendering is impossible in 2 *Kings* xxiii. 6, where we read that Josiah brought out the *asherah* from Jehovah's House, and burned it at the brook Kidron. In eradicating the Syrian practices that had been introduced, he broke down the houses of the male harlots that were in Jehovah's House, where the women were weaving houses, that is, tents, for the *asherah*.

The object was really a sacred pole; and some have attempted to explain it and the pillar as survivals from the worship of trees and stones. Philo of Byblus says there were two brothers at Tyre, one of whom invented the building of huts with reeds, and the other was the first to strip a tree of its boughs to make a boat. The latter dedicated two pillars to Fire and Wind, and worshipped them. After the death of the brothers, people dedicated rods to their memory, and continued the worship of the pillars. Such is Philo's account. More scientific methods have led others to regard the pole as representing the tree of life, the Assyrians' sacred tree, depicted, for example, on Lord Aberdeen's Black Stone.

In Arabic, *eshâra* means a sign; and the *asherah* appears to have been regarded, at least in later times, as a sign of Ashtart, that is, Ishtar, one inscription from Masûb speaking of Ashtart in the *asherah*.

Some have held there was a goddess Asherah, because the king of Amurra in the Orontes valley, about 1400 B.C., was named Abd-ashirta or Abd-ashrat, the servant of Ashrat, a name closely akin to *asherah*. And the second book of *Kings*, xxi. 7, speaks of Manasseh as defiling Jehovah's House with a *pesel* or carved image of the *asherah* which he had

made. But it is more probable that the word *asherah* here takes the place of Ashtart, as, for example, in the book of *Judges*, iii. 7, where it is said Israel served Baals and *asherahs*, it having been said a little before, ii. 13, that the service was given to Baal and Ashtarts. And when Elijah challenged Jezebel's prophets, 450 were prophets of Baal, the Melkarth of Tyre, and 400 were prophets of the Asherah, evidently the Ashtart of Sidon. We shall not, then, be far astray if we regard the pillar in historical times as a symbol of the male Baal, and the pole as a symbol of his female counterpart, Ashtart.

Images of the Gods

Images of the gods are found; and there are early traces of their existence. Yet they appear to have had an origin later than that of the stone pillars and wooden poles. It has been held, for example, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition, xii. 710, that "most religions of which the history has been traced give distinct indications of a primitive period in which 'idols' were unknown." According to the witness of the Vedic hymns for India, that of Herodotus, i. 181, and Strabo, 732, for Persia, that of Plutarch in his *Numa*, 8, for Rome, and that of Tacitus for Germany, the peoples of these places had no material idols at the first.

This evidence confirms the view that man, having lost the supernatural grace of God, turned to natural objects, such as meteoric stones, trees, rivers, serpents, and bulls. At a later time, images were made to represent these in the ritual, so that they were not merely *teraphim*, that is, images employed for magical purposes, but unworshipped so far as we know. Thus Baal with a crown of sun-rays evidently stood for the sun. Animal passion and fecundity were imaged in the full figure of Ashtart, the meaning being made the plainer when the hands pressed the large breasts or

carried a dove. Identified, then, with an abandonment of the Creator for the creature, and exalting the natural to the exclusion of the supernatural, these images were explicitly condemned by the Religion of Israel; and the position of the cults they represented may be still better understood in the light of the Incarnation. None can measure the difference between the Christian aureole and the Syrian sun-rays; between the Catholic conception of Our Lady and the Syrians' lady Ashtart; between the Sacred Dove of the Gospels and the dove of earthly passion in Ashtart's hand; between the picture of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs and the horrid statue of Melkarth.

It was well said in the *Spectator* of October 7, 1906: "That the symbolism and language of Christianity often present striking resemblances to those of other faiths is certain, and perhaps necessary, since all human beings live in the same world, and see with the same eyes, and experience for the most part the same sensations." And if it be further asserted that pagan and Christian art represent the "Mother of the gods" and our Blessed Lady in similar form, it is easily replied that "the fact proves nothing except that the idea of motherhood suggests everywhere the same images." The explanation is indeed simple and sufficient; and it is a superficial mind that does not attempt to penetrate the common language of images and metaphors to the inner meaning, so different in different religions.

Temples

Though temples were not essential, none the less they were built, and became the boasts of their builders, who had raised them to Melkarth or Ashtart or Eshmun or other of the many gods. At first, then, the worship needed only an altar. It was, in fact, like that of Cain and Abel, but directed towards natural objects or, as in the case of the Naram-Sin cult,

towards a deified king. The altar is separated into the sacrificial table and the stone pillar. The tree remains as a stump, which becomes a sign of Ashtart, and indicating a tendency not only to the sensuous but also to the sensual. We cannot say that now statues were introduced, and then huts made to shelter them, for some of the shrines were empty, and in some cases of the Ashtart worship the altar stood before a cave. Certainly, in some way the place was regarded as an abode of the god or goddess, or as a visiting hall to which the spirits of the dead could ascend. And this chamber, as distinguished from the porch or waiting-room, was known to the Greeks as a *megaron*, a name which has been interpreted as the Semitic *meghara* or cave. There the statue of the god would naturally be placed and canopied with some such symbol as the winged disk, which the Assyrians employed to indicate godhead. Then the statue would receive the same treatment as would have been accorded the god had he actually been present.

It would be a long but interesting story if we could trace the development from the cave to the house, thence to the shrines of Babylonia and Egypt, and from these again to the temples of Phœnicia. Afterwards, we should be able to illustrate how grace builds on nature, and how Divine Revelation takes up the products of human labour, sanctifies and elevates them. As it must employ human words, so it utilizes human works, purifying both words and works, charging them with vaster meaning, and making both subservient to supernatural activities. In the Tabernacle and its Ark, for example, we may trace features to which Canaan and Egypt had accustomed the Hebrews. And in Solomon's Temple, Hiram, a child of Israel and Phœnicia, was directed to combine both the Mosaic Tabernacle and the Syrian Temple. He accomplished for religious architecture what St. Paul achieved for the philosophy of history, and St. Thomas

Aquinas for the encyclopedia of philosophy and theology. By these three men, Syria, Greece, and Arabia offered their tribute to the Church of God. Phœnicia indeed could show the walled court of the temple, the portico and the bronze altar. According to Lucian, the temple at Mabbug, that is, Hierapolis by the ruins of Carchemish, had a double chamber and a vestibule. And as to the veil, Pausanias in our second century mentions one in the temple of Doto, that is, Dido, or loved one, at Gabala in Phœnicia. Antiochus gave an Assyrian veil, dyed with Tyrian purple, to the temple at Olympia. And earlier still, in the ninth century B.C., there was a veil in the temple of the sun at Sippara.

Through all the aberrations of the human race it has needed God and communion with Him. For this it has prayed in many ways, some of them pathetically obscure. One expression was in its temples. God answered. The Temple of Jerusalem became the place of His most special manifestation. In its details, it was significant of His self-revelation; and in its entirety, it symbolised His Church.

Syrian Worship

In the worship of the Syrian gods, frenzy played no small part. In the first book of *Kings*, xviii. 28, we read that the prophets of Baal—

> Called with a loud voice,
> And gashed themselves according to their manner,
> With swords and with lances,
> Until blood poured upon them.

And Lucian, in his *Syrian Goddess*, tells us that the spring-time festival, known as the "feast of torches," was celebrated not only by the burning of trees, which had been laden with offerings, and by the flinging of children from the temple roof, but also by the madness of those who gashed their arms, till the excitement

produced by such example incited others to imitate them in the mutilation of their bodies. In Origen, at a later time, the act was an unlawful means of preserving chastity. But in the Phœnician Galli it was, as Rawlinson points out in his *Phœnicia*, for the purpose of sterility and male harlotry. Distasteful as this subject must be, it is nevertheless necessary to consider it to-day, when there is so much revival of paganism and a readiness to compare it with the holy religion of Christ.

At Aphaka, by the source of the Adonis in the Lebanon, there is a cliff 1200 feet high; and from the cave beneath there flows in spring-time a stream of water, coloured red by mineral salts. This suggested the blood of Adonis, that is, the Babylonian Tammuz, for whom the women wept, as Ezekiel in Babylonia saw them in his vision of Jerusalem (viii. 14). Not only at Aphaka, but also at Gebal, as Lucian tells us in his *Syrian Goddess*, 4, the women, who would not shave their heads in mourning, sold themselves instead to a stranger, and spent the money on a sacrifice to Ashtart. It appears from Sozomen's *Church History*, ii. 5, and Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, iii. 55, it was not till that emperor's time the rites at Aphaka were suppressed. Some idea of the moral degradation may be gathered from the fact that the harlots, male and female, were known as the "holy ones," though the former were indeed described as "dogs," in a Cypriote inscription, exactly as in the Bible. Speaking of the various Ashtarts, Maspero says in his *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 161, "Around the majority of these goddesses was gathered an infamous troop of profligates (*kedeshîm*), 'dogs of love' (*kelabîm*) and courtesans (*kedeshôt*)."

That mourning and profligacy, bodily pain and sensual pleasure, should flourish together, is not wonderful. Feeling has become all; and the desire for sensations is gratified by pain as well as by

pleasure. The Hegelian classification of religions fails in analysis when it labels the Syrian as a religion of pain. It is a nature-cult, therefore of sense, and finally of sensation, both pain and pleasure. True, the names often emphasize the pain. Thus, if Conder's *Syrian Stone-lore*, p. 71, be right, Mecca is but Bekka, a word found in Baal-bek, and connected with the Semitic root, *bakh* or *bakhah*, to weep. At a later time the name of the god is derived from this root, and appears as Bacchus instead of Adhôni or Tammuz or Dionysus, that is, according to Conder in the same work, p. 148, Dayan-Nissi, "judge of men." Still continued the blending of wailing and wantonness.

The worship naturally became cruel. On special occasions there were human sacrifices, and especially the sacrifice of children. We are not referring to such cases as that in which He Who has supreme dominion commanded Abraham to offer the son in whom all his hopes and God's promises were embodied. Nor is it necessary to discuss the action of Jephthah, who rashly vowed to sacrifice whatever first met him, and then wrongly fulfilled his wrong vow by the sacrifice of his daughter. But we would refer to such cases as that of Ahaz, who made his own son "to pass over in the fire." The custom entered Jerusalem with the Syrian religions; and against it, Micah, vi. 7, protested when he asked,

> Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression:
> The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Writing after 44 B.C., Diodorus of Sicily, xx. 14, tells how children were placed in the hands of an image at Carthage that they might roll off into the fire. Plutarch, in his work on *Superstition*, p. 171, written in the latter half of our first century, speaks of such Phœnician sacrifices; and Tertullian, in his *Apology*, 9, written about 198 A.D., says they lasted till the proconsulate of Tiberius, that is, till 4 A.D.

The Spirit of Syrian Religion

The spirit of Syrian religion will be made more evident by its own language. This we can read in the inscription which Mesha, king of Moab, placed about the year 840 B.C. on the memorial stone at Dibon:—

I, Mesha, son of Kemosh-melek, king of Moab, the Dibonite.
My father was thirty years king over Moab, and I was king after my father.
And I made this high place for Kemosh in Qorkhah, in token of deliverance, because he delivered me from all assailants, and because he caused me to see [my desire] on all who hate me.
Omri was king of Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days, for Kemosh was angry with his land.
And his son succeeded him, and he said, he also, I will afflict Moab.
In my days he said so. And I saw [my desire] on him and on his house. And Israel perished for ever.
And Omri occupied the land of Mehedeba, and dwelt in it his days. And half of my days his son [did]. Forty years [in all]. And Kemosh restored it in my days.
And I built Baal-Meon, and I made the trench in it, and Qiryathan.
And the men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old. And the king of Israel built Ataroth for himself.
And I fought against the city, and took it. And I slew all the people of the city, a spectacle for Kemosh and for Moab. And I brought thence the altar of his Dûd. And I dragged it before Kemosh in Kiryath. And I settled the men of Sharan and the men of Makhrath in it.
And Kemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. And I went by night, and I fought against it from the break of the dawn until the noon. And I took it, and slew all of it, seven thousand men and youths and women and maidens and handmaids, for I devoted it to Ashtar-Kemosh. And I took thence the altars of Jehovah, and I dragged them before Kemosh.
And the king of Israel built Yahaz. And he dwelt in it, when he fought with me. And Kemosh drove him out from before me. And I took two hundred men

of Moab, all its chiefs, and led them against Yahaz, and took it to add to Dibon.

I, I built Qorkhah, the Wall of the Forests and the Wall of the Mound. And I, I built its gates. And I, I built its towers. And I, I built the king's house. And I, I made enclosures for the trench in the midst of the city. And there was no cistern in the midst of the city in Qorkhah. And I said to all the people, Let each of you make him a cistern in his house. And I, I cut the cutting for Qorkhah by Israelite prisoners.

I, I built Aroer. And I, I made the road by the Arnon. I, I built Beth-Hamoth, for it had been destroyed. I, I built Bezer, for it had been ruined. The chiefs of Dibon were fifty. For all Dibon was obedient. And I, I ruled a hundred among the cities which I had added to the land. And I, I built Mehedeba and Beth-Diblathan and Beth-Baal-Meon, and I led there the shepherds and the sheep of the land.

And as to Choronaim, in which dwelt . . . . and . . . . And Kemosh said to me, Go down, fight against Choronaim. And I went down. And Kemosh restored it in my days. And I went up thence. Ten years . . . . And I . . . .

It is of this Mesha it is recorded in the second book of *Kings*, iii. 27, that when he found himself shut up in Qir-Charasheth, and unable to break through the armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom,

> He took his son, the first-born,
> Who would have reigned instead of him,
> And offered him as a burnt-offering upon the wall.

The Syrian Hope of Immortality

Of the future life the inscriptions say little. There is the Aramaic inscription in the very north of Syria. It was cut in relief on a statue of Hadad, the sun-god, at Gergin before 732 B.C., about a century after Mesha's inscription. We read how Hadad, El, Resheph, Rekub-el, Shemesh, and Aroq-Resheph had prospered King Panammu, and given him all he had asked. Called by Hadad to build, Panammu pre-

pared both a place called after his own name and also a statue for Hadad. So Panammu tells us himself; and he appeals to his son who shall succeed him and shall sacrifice to Hadad or remember the name of Hadad. Let such a one say:

> May the soul of Panammu eat with thee,
> And may the soul of Panammu drink with thee.

The inscription is illegible in some places; but so far as we can interpret it, it reads:—

> I, Panammu, son of Qaral, king of Yadi, who raised this statue to Hadad in my time.
> There stood with me the god Hadad, and El and Resheph and Rekub-el and Shemesh.
> And Hadad and El and Rekub-el and Shemesh gave into my hand the sceptre of Chalavbah (?)
> And Resheph rose with me.
> And whatever I take in hand . . . . and whatever I ask of the gods, they will give me, and . . . . a land of barley . . . . a land of wheat, and a land of garlic, and a land of . . . .
> . . . . they will labour the land and vineland, where dwelt the . . . . of Panammu.
> Further, I sat upon the throne of my father, and Hadad gave into my hand the sceptre of Chalavbah.
> [I removed] sword and [evil] tongue from the house of my father.
> And in my days Yadi did also eat and drink.
> And in my days . . . . to establish cities and to establish. . . . . And for the sons of the villages of Chalavbah . . . . each will take . . . .
> And Hadad and El and Rekub-el and Shemesh and Aroq-Resheph gave me glory abundantly.
> And within me I was mindful of fidelity.
> And in my days I . . . . to the gods; and they receive that from my hand.
> And what I ask from the gods, that they give me abundantly, both land and the . . . . of Qaral.
> The gods wrought that. Hadad gave that to . . . . He called me to build. And in my Chalavbah Hadad gave me that . . . . to build.
> I built that and raised this statue of Hadad and the place of Panammu, son of Qaral, king of Yadi, with the statue of Hadad.

Whoever of my sons shall hold the sceptre, and shall sit upon my throne, and shall grow mighty and shall sacrifice to this Hadad . . . . and shall sacrifice . . . . shall sacrifice to Hadad and shall be mindful of Hadad's name or . . . .

He shall say, "May the soul of Panammu eat with thee. And may the soul of Panammu drink with thee."

He shall moreover be mindful of the soul of Panammu with Hadad.

. . . . this his sacrifice . . . . may he look with favour on him.

For Hadad and for El and for Rekub-el and for Shemesh, I, Panammu . . . . this . . . .

And I placed the gods in it.

And I was at rest in their Chalavbah . . . .

They gave me a seed . . . .

My son shall hold the sceptre, and shall sit upon my throne as king over Yadi.

And he shall grow mighty, and shall sacrifice to this Hadad, and shall be mindful of the name of Panammu.

And he shall say, "May the soul of Panammu eat with Hadad. And may the soul of Panammu drink with Hadad.

. . . . his sacrifice, may he not look with favour on him. And whatever he shall ask, may Hadad not give him. And may Hadad pour wrath on him. May he not in anger give him to eat. And may he keep sleep from him in the night, and give him fear.

. . . . shall put to death my kinsman beloved . . . . shall hold the sceptre in Yadi and shall sit upon my throne and shall reign, and shall put forth his hand with the sword . . . . let him not slay in anger or by . . . . or put to death by his bow or by his word.

. . . . he shall allow the destruction in accordance with one of his kinsmen, or in accordance with one of his beloved ones, or in accordance with one of his kinswomen . . . . he shall allow the destruction, and his kinsmen shall steal my memorial and shall raise and put something in its place.

He shall say, Your kinsman has destroyed, and set his hands against the god of his father.

He shall say, Behold, I have surely put words in the mouth of a stranger.

Say, arise, my eye . . . . or . . . . in the mouth of hostile men. Behold, this is a memorial. So you may cause his kinsman to cease.

Be mindful to crush him with stones.
And behold . . . . his kinswoman, crush her with stones.
And behold, if the destruction be his in accordance with her, and thy eye shall be wearied . . . . by his bow or by his might or by his word or by his instigation, thou also, thou shalt slay him . . . . or thou shalt direct a stranger to kill him.

There is another Aramaic inscription, set up at Zinjirli soon after 732 B.C., by King Bar-Rekub, son of another Panammu. Here there is no reference to a future life. The account tells how this Panammu died in the camp of his master Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and how that king and his whole camp wept for the dead man. The only invocation is one that Hadad, El, Rekub-el, the Baal of the house, Shemesh, and all the gods of Yadi may defend the memorial before gods and before men.

This inscription also is illegible in some places and unintelligible in others. But as far as we can decipher and translate it, it reads:—

Bar-rekub placed this statue to his father, to Panammu, son of Barzur, king of Yadi.
It is a memorial of the year of the deliverance of my father Panammu from the fate of his father.
The gods of Yadi delivered him from the destruction, which was in the house of his father.
And his god Hadad arose, and established his throne.
There was one who . . . . and sat and destroyed . . . . in the house of his father, and slew his father Barzur, and slew seventy kinsmen of his father. . . . .
He filled the prisons, and made the desolate cities more than the inhabited cities. . . . .
[And Hadad said] . . . . you have set a sword in my house, and you have slain one of my sons. And I also will cause the sword to be in the land of Yadi . . . . against Panammu, the son of Qaral. . . . .
He destroyed . . . . grain and corn and wheat and barley. And a *peres* [of wheat] rose to a shekel, and a *shatrav* [of barley] to a shekel, and and an *asnav* of drink to a shekel.
And my father brought [a present] to the king of Assyria, and he made him king over the house of his father,

and he removed the stone of destruction from the house of his father.

[And he released] the gods of Yadi from distress. . . . .

And he opened the prisons, and he released the captives of Yadi.

And my father arose, and he released the women of . . . . the house of the slain and . . . .

[And he rebuilt] the house of his father, and he made it better than it was before.

And wheat and barley and grain and corn were abundant in his days. And then food and drink were . . . . cheap of price.

And in the days of my father Panammu, he [the king of Assyria] appointed some as masters of villages and masters of the chariot. And he seated my father Panammu in the place of the kings of Kebar. . . . .

My father, whether he owned silver or whether he owned gold, in his wisdom and in his justice, he held by the wing of his lord, the king of Assyria.

And the king of Assyria set him over the governors and brethren of Yadi.

And his lord the king of Assyria set him over the kings of Kebar.

He ran by the wheel of his lord Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, in his encampments from the rising of the sun and unto its setting.

[And the king of Assyria conquered] the four quarters of the earth. And he brought the daughters of the sunrise to the sunset. And he brought the daughters of the sunset to the sunrise.

And my father . . . .

And his lord Tiglath-pileser added to his border cities of the border of Gurgum. . . . .

And my father Panammu, son of Barzur . . . .

Moreover, my father Panammu died while following his lord Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, in the camp.

And the heir of the kingdom bewept him. And the whole camp of his lord the king of Assyria bewept him.

And his lord, the king of Assyria, afflicted his soul, and appointed a weeping for him on the way, and he brought my father from Damascus to this place.

In my days [he was buried], and the whole of his house [bewept him].

And I, Bar-Rekub, the son of Panammu, for the justice of my father and for my justice.

> My lord seated me on the throne of my father Panammu, the son of Barzur.
> And I have raised this statue . . . . for my father Panammu, the son of Barzur. And I have built . . . . before the tomb of my father, Panammu.
> And as for this memorial, may Hadad and El and Rekub-El, the Baal of the house, and Shemesh and all the gods of Yadi [defend it] before gods and before men.

Nearly four centuries and a half later, about 290 B.C., "Tabnith, priest of Ashtart, king of Sidonians," left eight lines in Phœnician on his black sarcophagus at Sidon. Having warned everyone against opening the tomb, as against a thing hateful to Ashtart, he adds:—

> And if thou shalt surely open my chamber, and shalt surely trouble me, mayst thou have no seed among living men under the sun and resting-place among Rephaim.

In the last word of Tabnith's inscription there is plainly a reference to a world of disembodied souls. The same expression, as well as a reference to a more terrible fate, is found in the Phœnician inscription on the sarcophagus of Tabnith's son Eshmunazar, in the necropolis of Sidon. Warning everyone against opening the tomb, he says:—

> For every royal person and every man who shall open the chamber of this resting-place, or shall remove the chamber of my resting-place, or who shall move me in this resting-place, may they have no resting-place with Rephaim, or be tombed in a tomb. And may they have no son and seed in their stead. And may the holy gods enclose them with King Adar, who may rule over them to exterminate the royal person or man who shall open the chamber of this resting-place, or who shall remove this coffin.

The Syrian Cosmogony

Besides the whither of the human soul, the whence of the world is a question for men. In regard to the Syrian cosmogony, we depend on some fragments of

Philo's work, preserved in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel.* Originally, we are told, there was an unlimited Chaos and an unlimited Spirit. The latter loved its own principles, that is, its own essence. This love was called Desire, whence came Môt or mud. From Môt came all the seed of creation, but at first in the form of an egg. On the other hand, we read that two mortals were born of Kolpia, which is apparently the "Voice of the Breath," and his wife Baau, interpreted as "Night," but very probably the Hebrew *Bôhû*, that is, "waste," and having reference to Chaos. To the children of these mortals were born giants, who gave their names to the mountains of Syria.

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THE RELIGION OF EGYPT

From the French of

THE REV. ALEXIS MALLON

I

GENERAL NOTIONS

1. *In Ancient Egypt there existed a Religion.*—The Egyptians, like all ancient peoples, were, above everything else, religious. It has long been noticed that all the monuments they have bequeathed to us are temples or tombs: temples for the cult of the gods, tombs for that of the dead. These two ideas, the Divine and the Other-world, seem to have dominated their whole life, and to have claimed their best energies. It was beneath their influence that the Egyptians undertook those giant labours, and built the pyramids and temples which have defied the centuries and form matter for the amazement of each succeeding generation. Of private dwellings, of the homes of princes and the palaces of kings, nothing, or next to nothing, remains; they were but halting-stations for their inhabitants; were inns where one tarries for a day and passes on; no more attention than what necessity demanded was given to their building. And of the papyri which have reached us, the vast majority, not to say absolutely all, deal with subjects immediately or remotely religious; they enshrine the story of the gods, and hymns, and above all, information upon the after-life; formulas, prayers for the use of the dead. There existed, there-

fore, a religion in Egypt. What were its distinguishing characteristics? These can be reduced to two main points: it was a Religion of *Nature*, and it was *Composite*.

2. *General Characteristics of the Egyptian Religion.* —First and foremost, then, it was a religion of Nature, and primarily of the Sun: not indeed that the Egyptians adored sun or moon, heaven or earth, or their great river Nile; but if we set aside its abstract notions, all that their religion contained of symbols, of emblems, of figures and images, was borrowed from the visible Egyptian world. Hence, there exists a supreme God, a Creator: but this god approximates so closely to the sun that in certain hymns it is often impossible to distinguish whether it is the material sun or the God who is being worshipped. The sun, ever radiant, ever victorious, rising and setting in ever the same quarters of the sky, was for them the ideal figure of Divinity. They imagined him in a boat, during the daytime sailing resplendent over the heavenly ocean, at night floating down an unknown and mysterious stream, and returning from West to East, there to be re-born into the upper world, after his journey, prodigal of light and joy, among the dead.

The divinities of the second rank, who exercised a certain influence on world and men, but dependent ever on the sun-god, had for their emblem the moon; for the goddesses, it was the starry firmament or the earth; for the god of especial benevolence for man, Osiris, it was the Nile, father of Egypt; for yet other deities, Water, the Desert, etc. Did the Egyptians stop short at these material elements? Did they fail to reach the spiritual? the invisible? We shall show that our answer must be, unhesitatingly, *No.*

Another essential feature in this religion is that it was a mixture of different systems; it had no unity in the strict sense of the word, especially at first. About 4000 B.C., before the first king, Menes, had established the political unity of Egypt, each tribe

was independent, and had its own gods and temples, priests and rites, and beliefs. After the unification, when all Egypt owned one sway, the tribes, confined to their respective homes, continued to preserve their religious autonomy. However, together with political and commercial unification, the fusion of cults and creeds gradually came about. Out of the various pre-existing elements peculiar to the several tribes, a religion more or less common to all Egypt was not long in forming. Hence that army of gods and goddesses which peopled the Egyptian pantheon. There were more than sixty who received special worship in various places, without counting their attendant crowds of lesser deities. All these gods, come from every point of the compass, ended by taking up different relations one to the other, and finally formed an almost complete hierarchy. We must, however, insist, at the outset, that this multiplicity was but superficial: it was a multiplicity of titles, not of gods. The supreme Creator god was called Atûm at Heliopolis; at Memphis, Phtah; at Hermopolis, in Middle Egypt, Thot; Amon at Thebes; Horus at Edfû; Khnûm at Elephantiné; but if we examine them minutely, at once we recognize that these divinities have everywhere a like nature, the same attributes and properties, an identical rôle. They differ only in external imagery and in a few accidental features. Ultimately, we have one god under many denominations. The Egyptians were quite aware of this themselves. The worshippers of any local god claimed that he united in himself all the other gods. For the Thebans, the great Amon was Atûm of Heliopolis, Phtah of Memphis, Thot of Hermopolis; he was all the gods at once, or rather, he was the only true god, possessing within himself, under various names, the fulness of the divine prerogatives.

The same amalgam of notions was revealed in the current beliefs concerning man and the future life. Here, it would seem, unity was even harder of realization, either because the elements essentially defied

combination, or because the subject-matter was in itself dark and mysterious. We shall notice the various systems below.

Thus the Egyptian Religion does not offer itself to our eyes as a well-systematized body of doctrines, with definitely fixed principles, with stable and unshifting foundations, with logical conditions and conclusions which may form a homogeneous whole. It is a mixture of beliefs and cults placed side by side, sometimes harmonious, often disparate, and sometimes even contradictory.

II

God and Cosmogony

1. *The System of Heliopolis.*—The whole of ancient Egyptian theology is dominated and governed by the system which was formed at Heliopolis, a town not far from the Cairo of to-day. The doctrines which from the earliest times—from between 3000 to 4000 years before our era—were taught in this town, are known to us by means of perfectly authentic documents, *i.e.* the texts of the fifth dynasty pyramids. Heliopolis was one of the oldest towns of Egypt. Even after the foundation of the great cities of Memphis and of Thebes herself, Heliopolis always remained the religious capital. It was, moreover, the centre of learning; not only was theology taught there, but also all the other sciences then known, thither students flocked from all quarters for instruction and training; there Moses received his education. The University, so to call it, continued to exist till the Roman epoch. To-day Heliopolis has vanished; maize and cotton grow green upon its site; a solitary obelisk still stands upright, lonely and rigid above the waving crops.

According to the doctrine of Heliopolis, in the beginning ocean and darkness alone existed, the primeval waters and a chaos named Nû or Nûn. In

this dwelt none but *Atûm* (*Tûm*, he was also called), the first God who was to create and set in order the whole world; and from it he came forth when as yet there was neither heaven nor earth, neither plants nor animals. From it he came forth in the likeness of a Sun, and as in Egyptian *sun* is Râ, he was named Atûm-Râ or Râ-Atûm, or Râ unqualified. During the daytime he was Râ, travelling resplendent over heaven with the sun, and in the night-time Atûm, living his own life while all else is darkness and nothingness, and manifesting himself when and as he wills. When he shines on the horizon he is called by a special name, Râ Khopri, Râ Scarab, that is, to teach that he issues from his own substance and is re-born of his own intrinsic power. For the Egyptians the scarabæus-beetle was at all times the symbol of new birth and resurrection. Scarabs were always most carefully placed in every mummy, over the heart, as emblem and pledge of the dead man's return to a new life. In pictures, on the walls of subterranean chambers, on funeral papyri, when the sun sails the waters of the rivers of Night, and is on the point of returning to the horizon, he is pictured in his boat as having a human body with a scarab for head; in the daytime, when he traverses the firmament, his body is still human, but his head is that of the hawk of piercing sight, surmounted by the solar disk ringed by the uræus-snake. As Atûm—that is to say, in his rôle of First Principle—his head is always human.

Notice that according to the texts Atûm-Râ comes forth from Chaos, but does not create it. No more than the other nations of antiquity do the Egyptians appear to have had the idea of a creation *ex nihilo*—from nothing. They have some formulæ of striking energy—they cry to Atûm Râ or to Amon Râ: "O Thou who hast made all the gods, all men and all things!" but this making of all things presupposes, in their thought, pre-existing matter, Nû, or chaos. Their *creation* is really *organization*.

In the Heliopolis-doctrine this organization is related in a symbolic, almost cryptic fashion. Atûm-Râ, the first God, who lives of himself, is reproductive within and of himself; he has eight descendants, four male and four female, grouped in four pairs and named in the following order: Shû, Tafnut; Qeb (or Seb), Nût; Osiris, Isis; Set, Nephthys. The last four are but the grandchildren of Atûm-Râ: their parents are Qeb and Nût. This list of nine gods is not always identical. Ten, eleven, twelve and more are sometimes found, owing to the doubling of certain of the divine functions. Set is often replaced by Horus, and Nephthys by Hat-hor.

The first couple born of Atûm is accordingly Shû and Tafnut. Shû is a god of human form, and is known as the first-born son of Râ. His rôle, in the formation of the world, is to insinuate himself between the two other children of Atûm, Qeb and Nût, to separate them, to uplift Nût, the symbol of Heaven, by the middle of her body, and to hold her aloft, arched like a vault, still touching Qeb, the earth, with her feet in the East and with her hands in the West. Shû therefore is the air, the atmosphere which supports the firmament. In his numerous statues which still remain to us, Shû is represented kneeling on one knee upon the earth; his two hands are lifted to the height of his head, and on them, like a heavy burden, rests the sky.

Tafnut, sister of Shû, is a secondary deity of faded importance. She symbolizes the *heat* of the atmosphere, or fire, or light.

The second pair, Qeb and Nût, have well defined functions. Qeb is Earth, the lower world, and Nût Heaven, the higher. These two deities, originally united in a mystic wedlock and then separated by Shû, are the authors of all life that is to be. Qeb is the first father and Nût the first mother, for Atûm is neither father nor mother; his productive power is single. Nût, as firmament, is mother of the stars: she

symbolizes the celestial ocean where sails the solar bark.

Osiris and Isis, the two first-born of Qeb and Nût, are perhaps the best known and widest celebrated of Egyptian gods. Yet they owe this celebrity to a later phase of development, and not to their rôle in the Creation-system of Heliopolis. In it, in all probability, Osiris was the humid element, the fertilizing water, the Nile water, Nile itself; Isis was at first the fruit-bearing earth, the fertile soil. These two elements, once united, are the source of all the riches of Egypt. Further, Osiris would seem to represent the first man and Isis the first woman.

The last pair, Set and Nephthys, is revealed from the very outset as at war with Osiris and Isis in all their functions. Set is the sterile part of Egypt, the desert, the sands with their perpetual menace to the green valley, Isis and Osiris. Set is also the animal kingdom, and especially the mysterious creature whose home is in the desert and who is the enemy of mankind. Set is, in effect, pictured as a strange animal of whose identity we cannot yet feel sure. As for Nephthys, she would seem to exist only for the sake of parallelism; in pictures and statues she is a human-headed goddess, clad in a long tunic and carrying on her head the hieroglyph which represents her name.

Such is the myth of Heliopolis,—a group of nine, composed of a Creator-god, Atûm Râ, and of his eight descendants, who represent the totality of created things: the creation itself is related by a series of cryptic symbols. The following is a different account, clearer, and not devoid of beauty. It was placed in the mouth of Râ himself:—

> I am He that hath made the heavens and the earth, that hath lifted up the mountains, and created all that is upon them.
> I am He that hath made the water, and created the great abyss.

I am He that hath created the firmament and covered therewith the two horizons, and I have placed therein the souls of the gods.
I am He who, if he openeth his eyes, produceth Light, and if he closeth them, the Darkness: He that maketh the waters of the Nile to rise at his command: He of whose Name the gods themselves are ignorant.
I am He that maketh the Hours and giveth birth to the Days: I am He that sendeth the feasts of the year, that maketh the inundations.
I am He that maketh the flame of life to rise, that the labours in the fields may be permitted.
In the morning I am Khopri, and at midday Râ, and in the evening Atûm."[1]

The gods of Heliopolis were admitted and recognized by all Egypt; they became national gods, and received worship in the majority of temples.

2. *The Memphis-myth*.—Memphis, one of the first capitals of Egypt, adored from the outset a mysterious god called Phtah. His statues represent him in human form, standing upright, his head shaven, and entirely enveloped as it were with mummy-clothes, from which only his hands emerge. They hold a sceptre pressed against his breast. This picture is symbolic. Phtah filled at Memphis the position of Amon-Râ at Heliopolis. He is Creator of gods and men, and Organizer of the universe; but himself he remains hidden and invisible, nor emerges from the darkness to shine like a sun. He was, too, a god of the lower-world, endowed with authority in the kingdom of the dead, and is there called Phtah-Sokar-Osiris, or Sokaris for short. Connected with the cult of Phtah is that of the bull Apis. This bull was called the new life of Phtah, because in him the spirit of the great god was considered to reside. When the bull died, the spirit passed into another bull, and Apis was re-born. The highest possible honours were bestowed on it, not, it is quite clear, for his own sake, but because he was held to be the throne of the Divinity.

[1] *Cf.* E. Naville, *La Religion des Anciens Egyptiens*, p. 194.

3. *The Hermopolis-myth.*—At Hermopolis, Ashmûneîn in Middle Egypt, the supreme Creator-god was the ibis-headed Thot. This god sank rapidly to a lower rank, and had to be satisfied with appearing under human attributes and as the substitute of Râ. Later, he became the secretary of the gods, judge in the heavens, inventor of the Divine Words, *i.e.* of hieroglyphs. He it was who taught to men language and writing, mathematics, medicine, and all sciences. Thot did not remain alone: he had produced from his mouth four gods who joined to themselves, later on, four goddesses. At Hermopolis, too, was thus formed a group of nine similar to that at Heliopolis. But the eight secondary gods never had any personal, outstanding, clear-cut character, and are of no importance in Egyptian religion.

4. *The Theban-myth.*—At Thebes in Upper Egypt, the capital of the Middle and Later Empires, the well-known Amon or Amon-Râ was enthroned. The local beliefs were ultimately similar to those of Heliopolis, but they are better known, and seem to us more developed and on a higher plane. Amon, like Atûm, is the primordial deity who has created all and ordered all; he is the king of gods and the supreme master of men, and he, too, is identified with the sun. Various groups form themselves around him; the most important is a triad composed of Amon, the goddess Mut (the "mother"), and their child, Khons, a human god. To this triad, considered as a unity, it was sought to attach the eight gods of Heliopolis born of Atûm, so as to form a group of nine. This new group succeeded in attaching to itself yet other divinities, and ended by incorporating in itself nearly all the great gods of Egypt, associated one with another so as ultimately to fall into nine sets.

Amon Râ followed the fortunes of Thebes and of the greater Egyptian dynasties, and is certainly the god who received the greatest honours. To him was dedicated that gigantic temple of Karnak upon which

every generation spent new labour, and which grew worthy to be considered one of the world's seven marvels. By him inspired, Egyptian religious thought rose, as we shall see, to the highest level that it ever reached. Under the great dynasties a Divine Marriage was devised between Amon-Râ and the Queen, and hence the sovereign was supposed to spring. Amon entered into social life, and had a large share in the direction of human history.

5. *Other Divinities.*—Of the other divinities, we must mention Horus of Edfû, a solar god whose emblem is the winged disk which represents the sun at the moment when, victorious over his foes, he leaps into the air; and Khnûm of Elephantiné, whom the inhabitants of that district—their main trade was pottery—loved to portray as the divine Potter moulding the world and men upon his wheel.

The principal goddesses other than those already named were Hat-hor, Neith, Bastît, Sokhît, and Maât. Hat-hor is, fundamentally, but another form of the sky-goddess Nût; but in this better-known and more popular shape the goddess rose to the first rank among her fellows, and became the divine representative of women. Her emblem was at first a cow, which was painted as upheld in the hands of Shû, covered, like the firmament, with stars, and carrying on its back the solar bark. Neith was the most important goddess of Lower Egypt, and was honoured especially at Saïs. According to one of her statues, now in the Vatican, she is "the Mother who gave birth to the Sun, and who became a mother when none else had yet borne children." She is generally represented in warlike guise, holding a bow and arrows. Bastît and Sokhît are often associated: the former, cat-headed, sistrum in hand, basket on arm, presides over dancing, music, and games; the latter, "the Mighty One," with her lioness'-head crowned with the disk, finds her delight in battle and war. Finally, Maât is simply the deified idea of Truth and Justice.

6. *What the Egyptians held concerning the Nature of the Gods.*—Egyptian worship was not pure *Animal Worship* or zoolatry. For a long time all our knowledge of the Egyptians was derived from Greek authors, who were glad to dub the foreigners animal-worshippers. They nurtured, it was remembered, with the greatest care, crocodiles, cats, cynoscephalus apes, etc., and paid divine homage to them. But we must distinguish between different periods. In the last period, *i.e.* from the 7th century B.C. onward, there was indeed a certain animal cult, and we shall refer to it below; but previously nothing similar can be detected, whether in the most distant reaches of Egyptian history or in the wildest manifestations of the religious spirit. Nothing can be adduced except the cult of the bull Apis at Memphis and of another bull called Mnevis at Heliopolis; and these animals were, after all, honoured only for the intimate relations which, it was believed, they enjoyed with a deity distinct from themselves.

However, in all epochs alike, in the Egyptian pantheon might be noticed animals or animal-headed gods, and this shocked the artistic susceptibilities of the Greeks not a little. Thot has the head of an ibis; Amon, a ram's; Horus, a hawk's; Khnûm, a ram's; Anubis, the divine escort of the dead, a jackal's; Sobk, the water-god and patron of Ombos, and in particular of the Fayûm, a crocodile's; most of the goddesses have the head of a lioness. What can explain such hideous hybrids? In default of absolute certainty, we can but offer the most plausible hypothesis. At the origin, each of the nomad tribes which came and established themselves in the Nile valley had its religion and its totem, that is to say, a special animal of which the image was carried on a pole; it was the standard, the rallying-point of the whole tribe. Moreover, each of these tribes had its god. There was the Ibis-tribe, which worshipped Thot; the Ram-tribe, which worshiped Amôn; Horus

was the god of the Hawk-tribe. What were the connecting links between god and totem? And how did these two notions amalgamate, till they ended by forming a single whole? That is less clear. Probably when the tribes had become stationary and had built towns, and when, united and incorporated in a single kingdom under a single chief, they built temples and wished to represent their god in visible form, they chose as his emblem the more or less sacred animal which had guided them on their way. Thus they preserved at once their special cults, and an appearance of political independence. The totem, which had ceased to be a rallying-point, became a religious symbol. The hawk came down from his pole, where he had become meaningless, and his head was clapped on to the shoulders of Horus. The god in this composite form summed up in himself the whole life of the clan. The tendency to preserve these personal characteristics to the gods was strengthened by the fact that practically thus only could they be distinguished.

Polytheism.—To what grade in the knowledge of the Divine Nature did the Egyptians rise? We must begin by noticing that in their long-drawn history of over four thousand years ideas must inevitably have changed, evolved, been modified not a little; that they could not have been immutable and identical for all the millions of men who peopled the valley of the Nile. At the first glance, and considered as a whole, Egyptian religion is at all epochs alike purely polytheistic, with a marked inclination, in fact, towards idolatry. The plurality of gods is a fact which stares one in the face: it is everywhere, on all the monuments, in all the texts, in all the temples and the records, over all the face of Egypt. Not a single expression could we find of blame, of condemnation, of rejection; or of clear affirmation of the duty of believing on one only god, or of faintest praise for one who should so believe. Polytheism reigned supreme

over ancient Egypt, as over Assyria and Chaldæa. This polytheism was certainly not the crude idolatry which stops short at the statues of wood and stone; it habitually addressed itself to supra-sensible gods conceived as intelligent and powerful; yet very often, too, it attached itself to the material elements, and in particular to the sun. No doubt the material sun was endowed with higher and indeed divine attributes —life, intelligence, omniscience, omnipotence; he is called Creator of all things—but the worshipper could with difficulty disengage these attributes from their material subject, and they cannot easily be conceived of as realised elsewhere than in the material sun, so splendid and brilliant, the crowning marvel of the visible world. Idolatry, without being a distinctive characteristic of Egyptian religion, is, none the less, one of its secondary features.

Hints of Monotheism.—No doubt, then, remains, that these gods are stamped with the impress of error, polytheism, and idolatry. Yet we may ask whether in this religion, which was part of the life of so many millions of men, no spark of truth ever shone; if across this crass darkness the lightning never flashed which may reveal the one true God; if the theologians, at least, never rose to the conception of a god One, Infinite, and Spiritual; if they never uttered principles which should logically lead to monotheism.

For anyone who reads the texts without prejudice an answer of glad affirmation is the only one possible. Here is an extract from a hymn to Amon:

> "The august god, the Lord of all gods, Amon-Râ:
> The august Soul which was in the beginning:
> The great God who lives of Truth, the god of the first cycle who begat the gods of the other cycles, and who made all the gods:
> The unique One, who made all that exists when the earth began to be at the Creation, He of mysterious beggettings, of innumerable forms, of whose increasing none can tell. . . .
> Sovereign Lord of existence, all that exists is because He

is, and when it began to be, nothing existed except Him: from the first dawn of creation He was already the Solar Disk, Prince of the Splendours and the Glories, He whose appearing gives life to men."[1]

It is also said of Amon-Râ:

"He commanded, and the gods were born.
Men came forth from his eyes, and the gods from his mouth.
He it is who made the grass for the cattle, and the fruit tree for men; He who createth that whereon live the fishes in the stream and the birds under the heaven; He who putteth the breath in the egg, and nourisheth the son of the worm, and produceth the substance of insects, even as of worms and fleas; He who maketh what is necessary for the mice in their holes and nourisheth the birds on every tree.
It is for love of him that the Nile cometh, he the sweet, the well-beloved: and at his rising men do live.
And this Chief of the gods hath yet his heart open to him that calleth on him.
He protecteth the fearful against the audacious man.
Therefore is He loved and venerated by all that doth exist, in all the height of heaven, in the vastness of the earth, and the depth of the sea.
The gods bow down before thy majesty and exalt their Creator.
They rejoice at the approach of Him who did beget them:
Be praised! say the wild beasts. Be praised! saith the Desert.
Thy beauty conquers hearts."[2]

In spite of its numerous incoherences, does not this picture suggest to us the vision of a supreme Being, who has created all things, and gods as well? Of a Being whom all the universe, and the gods themselves, adore? Was not the fit conclusion that He alone deserved the worship of mankind? The hymns are numerous in which identical ideas recur in identical forms. It is no doubt true that it is nowhere declared that there is one only true god and that all the others are false: but the others are all the work of a First and Supreme; and this first god is unique—unique not

[1] *Cf.* Naville, *op. laud.*, p. 123.
[2] *Cf.* Adolf Erman, *La religion Égyptienne*, tr. Vidal, pp. 87, 88.

only in each individual town, at Memphis or at Thebes, but unique over all the face of Egypt and unique in heaven. It is the same god who, under different names, is everywhere. "He is the Amon who resides in all things, the venerated god who was from the beginning. It is according to his designs that Earth exists. He is Phtah, the greatest of the gods, he who becomes aged and full of years, and then once more a young child, in a duration that lasts eternity."[1] Elsewhere the same god is identified with Atûm of Heliopolis and with Thot of Hermopolis. Yet in spite of their lofty conception of the deity, the Egyptians remained in practice polytheists; they preserved in their Olympus an army of gods to whom they built temples, put up statues, and offered sacrifice. Like the other pagans of antiquity, they deserved the reproaches of the apostle.[2] As for their religious feelings, the solidity of their convictions, their respect for the divine, their confidence in it, the spontaneity of their worship, their zeal in offering sacrifice, their fidelity to the sacred ceremonies and daily exercise of worship—in a word, the practical observance of religion, all this is revealed to us as animated by the greatest loyalty and the most profound sincerity. This is the general tone of all their religious literature; scarcely can one verify one or two isolated texts which betray doubt or indifference, and which insinuate the enjoyment of this present life and its pleasures without thought for the future.

III

Legend of Isis and Osiris

Of the numerous legends which crystallized round the gods, none had a wider success than that of Osiris and Isis. We cannot omit it here, for it pervaded Egyptian religion, and was the foundation

[1] *Cf.* Naville, *op. laud.*, p. 125. [2] Rom. ii. 21.

of all hopes of a future life. This legend is related by Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris*; but it is to be found in detail even on the oldest of Egyptian monuments.

Osiris, son of Atûm-Râ, had to wife his sister Isis. He was long ago king on earth, after Râ his father, and taught men the doctrines of the good and the practice of virtue. He was the best of all kings; he made his people happy and procured for them all earthly goods, and made peace and justice to rule throughout his kingdom. Now Set, brother of Osiris, urged on by jealousy or by some other motive unmentioned by the legend, resolved to dethrone him and put him to death. The faithful Isis, who had discovered this criminal design, succeeded for some time in foiling the plots of Set; but his skilful intrigues ended by triumphing over Osiris: he seized him, tore him to pieces, and scattered the mutilated fragments to the four winds of heaven and over the waters of the sea. Isis, stripped of all her rights, humiliated, all tears, set out, heart-broken, to search for the remains of Osiris, and gave herself no rest till she had found them. Then, kneeling down beside her sister Nephthys, she uttered this prayer:

"Come to thy home, come to thy home, O God On!
Come to thy home, O thou who hast no enemies.
O fair youth, come to thy home where thou shalt see me.
I am thy sister who loveth thee; thou shouldst not hold aloof from me,
O fairest child, come to thy home. . . .
I see thee not, and yet my sorrowful heart goeth toward thee,
And mine eyes are all eagerness to see thee.
Come to her who loveth thee, thee, O Ûnnofriû, the blessed.
Come to thy sister, come to thy bride; come to thy bride, O thou whose heart has ceased to beat.
Come to the mistress of thy house.
I am thy sister, born of the same mother. Stay not far from me.
God and man alike have their face turned to thee, and alike lament thee. . . .
I call, and I lament, and my calls and my laments rise up to heaven, but thou hearest not my voice.

Yet am I thy sister whom thou lovedst when on earth.
Save me, thou lovest none other, O my brother, my brother."[1]

And the greatest of the gods had pity on Isis, and he sent one of his children, Anubis, who embalmed and buried Osiris. Then Osiris began to live once more, not indeed on this earth, but in the other world, where he became God, King, and Judge of the dead. Yet upon earth he had an Avenger in the person of his son Horus, born after his father's death. Horus, brought up by his mother Isis amid a thousand dangers, driven to seek a sanctuary in the desert to escape the implacable pursuit of Set, grew at last to maturity, and dethroned Set, and placed on his own brow the crown of Egypt.

The success of this story was ultimately due to the human elements which are its groundwork: love of justice in Osiris, conjugal fidelity and maternal tenderness in Isis, filial piety in Horus, and, highest of all, the recompense of the righteous in a better world, the final triumph of justice over iniquity, of life over death.

IV

Man and his Destiny

Immortality of the Soul.—For the Egyptian, man was composed of a body, a soul, and a third element which was called Kâ, and which, with the French, we may translate *double*.[2] In the paintings the Kâ is in fact often represented standing behind the individual in question, in appearance identical with him; in short, his vaguer replica. The nature and function of this element are extraordinarily obscure. It was conceived as a sort of invisible genius or shadow, which accompanied each person, or perhaps dwelt within

[1] *Cf.* Erman, *op. laud.*, p. 49.
[2] *Cf.* Astral Shape, and the account given of the Roman *Genius*, Lecture XIII., pp. 10, 11.

him; which was born with him, but which survived him, and after his death continued to manifest an interest in his soul and his body. Whatever we may hold about the Kâ, whether we regard it as distinct from the soul, which is the common opinion of Egyptologists, or as identical with it (which is far harder), it is absolutely certain and universally admitted that the Egyptians had the most obstinate belief in a future life, and, in consequence, in the survival of an essential part of man. This belief is what is most outstanding, and in the most vigorous relief, in the Egyptian soul. To realize it, one need but cast a glance at their monuments and funerary literature. Chaldæa, Assyria, Greece, may boast of their temples; but if there is one thing which is unique in this world, and which is peculiar to the Nile valley, it is assuredly those gigantic tombs which are the Pyramids, those subterranean chambers bored vertically for 70 or 80 feet into the sheer rock, as at Saqqarah, or tunnelled into the mountain to a depth of 650 feet as at Thebes; and it is those mummies which were so well embalmed that the lapse of 4000 years has left them as perfect as when they left the hands of the embalmers. Why these huge labours, this scrupulous care, these multiplied precautions, if nothing of man survived to reap and enjoy the fruits of them in an existence beside whose lengths the span of mortal life might count as naught? Do not seek an adequate explanation in pride, in a vanity anticipatory of the joys of having a tomb impenetrable, and flesh that never should corrupt. Though this motive may have played its part, and however great may have been the force of standing custom, that is certainly not the source of the principle itself, the imperious principle which dominates all Egyptian burial, and which dictates that at all costs the body must be preserved from corruption and must keep its limbs entire. This principle could only follow from a belief in a future life, whatever its conditions might be.

Besides, written documents exist, and are decisive, and make all doubt impossible. The most important of these documents is the *Book of the Dead.* It is one of the world's most ancient texts: it dates from the earliest dynasties, and extracts are found graven on the latest tombs. It was so popular and so useful in the other life that everyone was eager to take it with him into his grave. One of the most important services one could render to the dead man was to furnish him with a complete copy of the book, or at least with a transcription of its essential parts. Now, not only does this book explicitly affirm the immortality of the soul,[1] but by its very nature and aim it presupposes and exacts it, so much so, that without this belief the book would be utterly pointless and lose all *raison d'être.* In fact, it is a collection of various documents which may serve to instruct the soul in all that it must accomplish in the other world—chants to be intoned, prayers to be recited, formulæ to be repeated before the gods and the genii who guard the dwellings beneath the earth; it tells of the canals to be crossed, and the means of finding a bark; of pathways to be followed in order to reach the fields of bliss; the plan of the most formidable spots; the portraits of the most alarming foes—in fact, a regular guide, an illustrated guide, to the lower world. Whatever name be given to the part of man which goes on living, or rather which lives with a new sort of life, it is certain that it implies a continuation, a prolongation of personality; it is still the same individual who existed upon earth who still exists, and who repeats again and again such words as these:

> I am I, [his name follows here];
> I stand upright:
> I live: I have all my limbs.
> I begin myself anew.

[1] For instance, in chapter 44, where we read "I die not a second time in the Nether World." Le Page Renouf, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, London, 1904, p. 101.

The belief in another life is therefore one of the best established points in Egyptian Religion. Let us follow the soul through this new phase.

THE JUDGEMENT.—Immediately after death, the deceased underwent a judgement before Osiris and forty-two other judges, his assessors. This judgement scene is celebrated, and is reproduced on almost all the funerary papyri, which are preserved in great numbers, and which are in fact simply extracts of greater or less length taken from the Book of the Dead.

Osiris, the god of the dead, is seated on his throne; at his side are ranged, sceptre in hand, the forty-two judges; before him is a balance, and in one scale is placed a leaf, the symbol of Righteousness; in the other the heart of the deceased. Anubis, the god who had buried Osiris, weighs the heart; Thot, the scribe of the gods, writes the results; in a corner lurks a hideous monster, to execute, if necessary, the sentence. In front, the deceased watches the weighing, and by no means impassively; for he speaks, he proclaims his innocence. This is when the *Negative Confession* takes place. Transporting himself in thought to this supreme moment when his eternity is being decided for him, the Egyptian could hear, clear and distinct, each cry of his conscience; he could discriminate most vividly every obligation of the moral law which was written in the very depths of his being; not one of them does he dismiss; he realizes acutely all their gravity; he understands that the disregarding of them merits punishment, that to observe them merits rewards. He knows that there is one only way to salvation, and that is innocence and justice. And so a proclamation of perfect innocence is put into his mouth.

Hence the *Negative Confession* gives us a standard whereby to measure the Egyptian code of morals:—

The Negative Confession

Hail to thee, mighty God, Lord of Righteousness.
I am come to thee, O my Lord: I have brought myself that I may look upon thy glory. I know thee and I know the name of the forty-two gods who make their appearance with thee in the Hall of Righteousness, devouring those who harbour mischief, and swallowing their blood, upon the Day of the searching examination in presence of Unneferu.
Verily, "Thou of the Twain Eyes, Lord of Righteousness," is thy name. Here am I; I am come to thee; I bring to thee Right, and have put a stop to Wrong.
I am not a doer of wrong to men.
I am not one who slayeth his kindred.
I am not one who telleth lies instead of truth.
I am not conscious of treason: I am not a doer of mischief.
I do not exact as the first-fruits of each day more work than should be done for me.
My name cometh not to the Bark of the god who is at the Helm.
I am not a transgressor against the god.
I am not a tale bearer: I am not a detractor.
I am not a doer of that which the gods abhor.
I hurt no servant with his master.
I cause no famine: I cause no weeping.
I am not a murderer: I give not orders for murder.
I cause not suffering to men.
I reduce not the offerings of the temples: I lessen not the cakes of the gods.
I rob not the dead of their funeral food.
I am not an adulterer.
I am undefiled in the sanctuary of the god of my domain.
I neither increase nor diminish the measures of grain.
I am not one who shorteneth the palm's length.
I am not one who cutteth short the field's measure.
I put not pressure upon the beam of the balance.
I snatch not the milk from the mouth of infants.
I draw not the cattle from their pastures.
I net not the birds of the manors of the gods.
I catch not the fish of their ponds.
I stop not the water at its appointed time.
I divide not an arm of the water in its course.
I extinguish not the lamp during its appointed time.
I do not defraud the Divine Circle of their sacrificial joints.

I drive not away the cattle of the sacred estate.
I stop not a god when he cometh forth.
I am pure, I am pure, I am pure, I am pure.[1]

And again, addressing each of the forty-two assessors by name, he ends thus:—

"Be ye praised, O gods, who are in the Hall of the Two Truths, you whose bodies contain no lies, and who live of Truth. . . . See, I come to you without stain of evil, without sin. . . . I live of Truth, and I feed upon the truth of my heart. I have done what men do say and what doth satisfy the gods; I have contented the gods with that which is their pleasure; I gave bread to the hungry and water to him that thirsted, clothes to the naked and a boat to him that had no boat. I gave offerings to the gods, and funeral alms to the glorified Ones (=the Dead)."[2]

Thus the Egyptians held as certain that every human action met with its sanction in the other life. This position cannot be disputed, and in fact is not. This belief is directly affirmed in the Later Empire, and even in the middle Empire, which leads us back into the third millennium before Christ. Until recently not many clear traces could be found of it in documents previous to the Middle Empire, and many Egyptologists had proposed the hypothesis that this idea of sanction was in fact unknown to the early Egyptians. However, a tomb of the 6th dynasty has recently been discovered which bears inscriptions containing fragments of the Negative Confession, and which speaks explicitly of the judgement. "I shall be judged by the Great God, Lord of the West, in the place where Truth is" [or, according to a variant rendering, in the place where judgement is given]. In consequence the deceased proclaims his innocence: "I have told no lies before the judge: I have sworn no false oaths."[3]

[1] Le Page Renouf, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, London, 1904, p. 212–214.

[2] *Cf.* Erman, *op. laud.*, pp. 147, 148.

[3] J. Capart, *Funeral Chamber of the VIth Dynasty*, 1906, p. 25, Plate III (in French).

Thus the idea of sanction is found in the Early Empire, and would appear to be a primordial notion of the Egyptians.

RETRIBUTION.—1. *The Fate of the Wicked.*—When the trial was completed, Osiris pronounced the verdict. This verdict was not identical for all: it devoted the righteous to happiness and the wicked to hideous torments. Of details the texts give us but few; the whole subject was too lugubrious to attract the imagination of the Egyptians.

For trivial or venial transgressions a sort of purification by fire was, at one epoch at any rate, devised; and after it the deceased was admitted to the company of the blessed. This is the lesson clearly taught by some copies of the Book of the Dead preserved in the Louvre. The scene which represents the weighing of the Soul "is followed by the vignette of the pool of fire, guarded by four dog-headed apes: these were the genii charged with effacing the stain of such offences as might have escaped the attention of the righteous soul, and thus to complete its purification."[1]

The deceased man who was subjected to this trial was, strictly speaking, already justified, and was reckoned in the number of the righteous; but the genuine sinner had to suffer torments indefinitely more terrible. Sometimes he was condemned to become the living prey of horrible monsters who sucked his blood, tore to pieces his flesh, and devoured his entrails: sometimes, too, he was constrained to enter the body of a hog, and return to earth, there to eke out a miserable existence.

2. *The Fate of the Righteous.*—Here again, in spite of a great abundance of texts, the Egyptian doctrine remains very vague and undefined. Invariably the pure and innocent soul is endowed with an infinite happiness which he enjoys in perfect security, in the

[1] Emmanuel de Rougé, *Summary Description of the Rooms of the Egyptian Museum*: new edition; P. Pierret, Paris, 1873, p. 102.

company of the other blessed, and under the immediate eye of the gods, but this happiness was conceived of in many different ways. It would not be here within our scope to study in detail the Egyptian paradise, its origin, its development, its different phases. It will be enough to indicate a few general features. The descriptions with which documents furnish us, create for us two types of Paradise. The first and oldest, and the type which appears to have been dominant until the Later Empire, was simply a facsimile of earthly life in a world which was located underground, or behind the Western Mountains, where the sun disappeared, or, again, in the Happy Islands of the Mediterranean. It was simply human life again, only immortal, and devoid of all grief or pain; an ideal life such as the Egyptian conceived of it: wide estates, rich harvests, immense flocks and herds, numerous servants, a river full of fish, fishing and hunting expeditions; in short, all honourable pleasures and enjoyments of the material self. The second and more elevated type is, in its essence, life with the gods, especially with the supreme God—Râ, the Sun-God. The deceased, pure and righteous as is Osiris—indeed, himself now called by the divine name Osiris—is admitted into the divine fellowship, and there receives a new life, superior to the old life of earth. The geographical position of this Paradise varies with the ages. The texts mention at first the bark of the Sun. There is Râ, or Amon Râ, with all his court. In the earlier times, kings alone, it would appear, were admitted into the divine procession; simple people had to content themselves with the first type of Paradise. Later on, all the just might aspire to an identical happiness. The texts speak especially of a vague subterranean region which is the true Kingdom of the Dead, the Elysian Fields of Greek mythology. This is a blending of the sensuous and of the contemplative Paradise. The righteous soul is admitted to the presence of the

gods; he can contemplate them, and even converse familiarly with them; but his movements are in no way hampered: he can go out and come in at pleasure, he can go about upon the earth's surface, and cultivate his fields, and sail upon the waters; it is his joy to watch the sun float by upon his midnight journey; and, in a word, all he can desire, he has.

It is curious to observe that this supreme happiness was not granted to the just soul immediately after the Verdict. Before reaching it, he had to pass through a series of trials; to triumph over numerous enemies who barred his path; to make his way through a labyrinth of dim halls guarded by dreadful monsters. All this journey is described in detail in the Book of the Dead, and that is why it was so important to have a copy of this book in one's hands.

V

End of the Egyptian Religion

Such was the general aspect of Egyptian Religion during long centuries. Six or seven hundred years before our era it embarked on a career of decadence. Then begins, to last until the introduction of Christianity, that unchecked cult of animals which Herodotus describes to us. These animals, which the ancients had in some sense mingled with their worship as symbols of the Deity, now ascended the altars in their own persons, and, if they do not actually evict the gods, at least they relegate them to the second rank. Serpents, crocodiles, birds, cats, rams, are treated as sacred objects, and are reverenced as much as, or more than, the statues of Amon-Râ and Osiris, are embalmed, mummified, and buried with divine honours. Incalculable is the number of the sacred animals which modern discoveries have brought back to light, buried with all the flattery and luxury which in old

days only the rich and powerful could afford. Immense cemeteries full of them are found, side by side with the ancient burying-places of lords and kings. Cats emerge from their trenches in hundreds of thousands, each carefully swaddled in its bandages, protruding a desiccated head. Whole families of crocodiles come forth from hole and cavern, carrying at times within them precious papyri, which were used to stuff them. Hawks, ibis, serpents, fish, are delivered up by the broken potsherds, and lie in heaps among the relics. It really seems as if the men of those generations, victims of some extraordinary mental aberration, lavished more care on the sepulture of a cat than on that of their father or mother.

It was, moreover, in this same epoch that those blue-enamelled earthenware statuettes which have been called *Respondents* appear in the tombs in vast numbers. Though the ancient religious notions on the future life remained fundamentally identical, yet a new element had found its way into them. It was thought that the dead, like the living, were the victims of forced labour: to escape it, nothing better could be devised than the offering of substitutes. The god who claimed to oblige them to dig, to plough, to reap, to carry water and sand, might well, thought they, animate an earthenware man, give him the breath of life, and accept him as their substitute. Why not? So it behoved a man to carry away with him a sufficient number of these inexpensive substitutes, destined to respond to the name of the deceased and execute for him all the work that might be demanded. We need not point out how considerable is the further decline of moral and religious ideals which this notion indicates.

Under the Ptolemies (*c.* 300–30 B.C.) decadence moves headlong, in spite of the exterior pomp and circumstance of the religious ceremonies. The new rulers of Egypt realized what an advantage they could draw from the national religion as a prop for their power, and they used the old beliefs as an instrument of govern-

ment. Not only did they leave them all liberty, but they vied with one another in exalting their prestige. They respected the privileges of the sacerdotal caste, took part in processions and the divine ritual, restored the temples and enriched them with the most sumptuous adornment. Most of the sanctuaries still standing in Egypt are the work of the Ptolemies. In return, the people set no bounds to their veneration for these worthy successors of the Pharaohs; the priests decreed divine honours to them as in the days of Rameses and Thotmes.

And yet all this gaudy display was but a surface phenomenon: it lacked that spontaneity, that sincerity, which proceeds from the heart's inner self. The grand religious notions of yore had for all time deserted the Egyptian soul. The whole of Egypt sank deeper and deeper into the slough of animal worship. The rôles are reversed: man is no longer lord of the animals, but they become his masters. One must suffer oneself to be stung by snakes, devoured by crocodiles, rather than cause them the slightest injury by trying to defend oneself. A Roman who by accident had killed a cat was murdered by the mob (Diodorus Siculus, i. 84). The inhabitants of the Cynopolite nome (in Middle Egypt) caught and ate a certain fish venerated by the inhabitants of the neighbouring nome of Oxyrhynchus. A sacred war was at once declared, and the Oxyrhynchites captured the dog adored by the Cynopolites and cut its throat (Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 72). Crocodiles were kept in sacred cisterns at enormous expense (Strabo, xvii. 38). The author of the *Book of Wisdom*, who lived at Alexandria about 150 B.C., and who was in consequence an eyewitness of these horrors, had no need at all to strain his imagination when he wrote (xi. 16, 17): "In punishment of the insane imaginings of their iniquity, for that some of them in their folly adored dumb serpents and senseless beasts, Thou didst send upon them a multitude of dumb animals for Thy

vengeance, that they might know that whereby a man sinneth, thereby is he likewise punished." No doubt the Egyptian generations contemporary with the Exodus had deserved these words of reproach, for they too had had an exaggerated cult for animal-emblems of their gods; but with far greater reason were they addressed to the Egyptians of these last six centuries, who abased their animal fetishism to the most degrading practices.

Such was the religion of the people. Was that of the higher classes the self-same? At Alexandria and in the other towns where the Greek element was dominant, we cannot doubt but that the thinking and literary classes were gradually detaching themselves from the old beliefs, or rather, were tending to modernize, that is, to Hellenize them. Greece, at that time, meant Science, Philosophy, in a word, Civilization. The attraction Greece universally exercised drew men likewise toward the Greek religion. Accordingly we can see the gods of Olympus making their way into the ancient circles of the Heliopolitan or Theban deities; Zeus ascends the temple thrones of Osiris or of Amon; Aphrodité takes her place at the side of Isis. As ideas advance, many of the ancient national divinities were actually forgotten; only a few of them remain: Osiris, Isis, Horus, Thot. Even so, care is taken to strip them of their rigidity and hieratic outline; to deliver them from the bands which swathe them; to set them at their ease among the lithe and supple Greeks. Horus becomes Harpocrates, a charming child who likes to go for rides on goose or ram, the sacred animals of Amon; or else holds his finger to his lips, and so becomes named God of Silence. Or again, we meet him disguised in Greek attire, and on his arm rests a basket, or a horn of Plenty. His mother Isis, too, was obliged, if she was still to find worshippers, to put on the characteristics of Aphrodité. Osiris, at Alexandria, had to retire into the background before great Serapis, or else to identify

himself with this new god, imported from Sinopé in Asia Minor by Ptolemy II. on the advice of a dream. Serapis installed himself in a luxurious temple in the very heart of Alexandria, and remained the favourite god of the citizens until they were converted to Christianity. In the first Christian century Egyptian Religion was but a hotch-potch of Greek and Egyptian elements.

In this shape it subsisted for some time still, in the Delta towns especially, side by side with the new Faith. Christianity spread with extraordinary rapidity up the entire valley of the Nile; in the third century the majority of the population was already Christian. The last vestiges of the old worship are to be found in the sixth century in the temple of Isis at Elephantiné.

APPENDIX

The treatise of the old Bœotian and priest, Plutarch of Chæronea, upon Isis and Osiris, deserves to be mentioned in these pages. It marks the highest point of Greek philosophical reflection when it was applied to the old Egyptian cult of Isis and Osiris, which in a mystical and sublimated form attained enormous popularity in the first two or three Christian centuries. In it we see the old Egyptian worship of Truth still accentuated, and, in accordance with the philosophy of the time, the transcendent unity of the divine nature is much stressed, the anthropomorphic mythology being allegorized away.

To call the Nile or other natural phenomena "*God*," Plutarch argues (p. 377, C), or the vine *Dionysus*, implies no more than the calling the rudder the *pilot*, or medicine the *healer*. It would be absurd if we meant it literally. "For not mindless, nor soulless, is God, nor an instrument in human hands." God is

one and eternal, though many-named, just as sun and moon are one, though called differently by different nations. "We use," he continues (p. 378, A), "consecrated symbols, some enigmatic, some transparent, in our guidance of man's thought to the Divine. Yet not without danger! For some do lose their foothold, and roll headlong into superstition, and others, shunning superstition as a slough, fall, before they know it, over the cliff of atheism." Living human creatures, he insists (382, B), are better "mirrors" of God than the richest statues. And through it all, truth is being sought, "for (p. 351, C) there is no gift greater for man to take nor more august for God to give, than Truth." The attaining of truth explains Immortality; for (*ib.*, E) 'if thought and intelligence of things were taken from us, immortality would be no life, but merely time." The story of Osiris, rent by his enemy, and gathered into one by Isis, means that Sin strains to tear asunder the divine Word within us, which the goddess [whose name he derives from *eidenai*, to know] reunites; and they are in truth and justice named "carriers of sacred things" and "adorners of sacred things" [two Egyptian ritual offices], "who carry about in their soul, as in a shrine, the sacred Word about the gods, pure of all superstition and exaggeration, and in their soul adorn it" (352, B). And the Isiac devotee was buried in his religious habit to show (*ib.*) that "this divine Word is with him, and that possessing it and naught beside he makes his journey thither."

In what is perhaps his sublimest passage (382, E) he explains the mysterious existence of Osiris and the soul in the Hidden World beyond death.

"This thing that our priests to-day, with prayer for mercy and in dim revelation, most reverently do hint, even that Osiris is King and Lord among the dead, bewilders the minds of most men who know not how the truth of this thing is. For they fancy that Osiris, in whom most surely is all holiness of God and nature, is thus said to be in the earth and beneath the earth, where are hidden the bodies of those who seem to have had their end. But Osiris' self is far indeed from earth, untouched,

undefiled, immaculate of all substance that admits of corruption and of death. And souls of men, here in the embrace of bodies and of passions, have no communion with the God save as in a dream, a dim touch of knowledge through philosophy. But when they are set free, and shift their homes into that Formless and Invisible and Impassible and Pure, then in truth is God their leader and their king, even this God, so that fastened unto Him, and insatiably contemplating and desiring that Beauty ineffable and indescribable of man—whereof the old legend would have it that Isis was in love, and did ever pursue and with it consort—all beings there are fulfilled of all the good and fair things that have share in creation."

As for Isis, in these words does she address one who in his distress had invoked her[1]:—

"Lo, I am here, Lucius, moved by thine entreaty, I, parent of nature, lady of the elements, firstborn of the ages, crown of godhead, queen of the dead, first in heaven, unific vision of gods and goddesses, who at my nod govern the luminous towers of the sky, the healthful breezes of the sea, the lamentable silences of hell, to whose single Power in myriad symbol, in varying rite, in manifold name, the whole world does worship." And she recites the long roll of names by which the one mother-godhead was now conceived of as invoked. "I am here, pitying thy distress, I am here, favourable and propitious. Put away tears and leave lament, and groan no more, for in my providence thy day of salvation has dawned." And she concludes: "And utterly remember this—this keep thou deeply hidden in thy heart, that all the remaining course of thy life is pledged to me, down to the very limit of thy last breath,—for it is but just that to her, by whose beneficence thou art returning to man's life, thou shouldst repay all that thou shalt henceforth be. For live thou shalt, and happy, nay, glorious, beneath my patronage; and when thou shalt have measured to the end thy allotted span, and gone to the lower world, there in that hollow heart of earth shalt thou have vision of me, shining across the gloom, Queen even in the inner realm of Hades, and at last, in the heavenly fields, thou shalt be ever at my side, and I will be gracious unto thee, and me shalt thou adore."

Somewhat later (*ib.*, 25) Lucius addresses her in these words:

"O thou most holy and eternal saviour of the human race, and ever most munificent in thy tender care of mankind, unto the

[1] Appuleius, *Metamorphoses*, xi. 5.

hazard of our sorrow thou givest the sweet affection of a mother. Nor doth any day or any night's repose, nay, not a tiny moment, vanish past empty of benefits, but ever on earth and sea thou art protecting men, driving aside life's tempests, stretching forth thy right hand of salvation. The threads of our life, by us inextricably entangled, thou dost untwine; thou stillest storms of fate, thou holdest the evil goings of the stars. Thee Heaven doth worship; the shades are thy servants; 'tis thou dost spin the world, and lightest up the sun, and governest the universe, and tramplest upon hell. To thee the stars make answer, for thee the seasons return, heaven's powers exult, the elements obey. At thy nod blow the breezes, clouds give fertility; thine is the germing of the seed and the growth of the germ. Before thy majesty the birds do tremble whose goings are in the air, and the beasts that haunt the hills, and the serpents lurking in the dust, and the monsters that swim in the ocean. But I, scant of soul for the offering of thy praise, poor of patrimony for the celebrating thy sacrifices, feeble of voice for the telling out my heart's knowledge of thy Majesty—nay, nor would one thousand mouths, one thousand tongues suffice, nor the long utterance of an eternal lauds,—I, what (in my poverty) my worship, at least, can do, that will I care to effect. Thy divine Countenance and most holy godhead, stored within my heart of hearts will I forever keep, and there will watch and picture it."

It will be seen that a worship doomed to almost immediate decay could still inspire such different characters as the pious old Greek priest and the licentious African to genuine worship.

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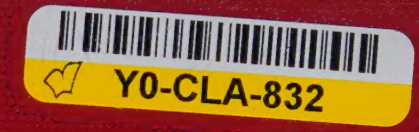
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